PAUL AND CHRIST:

A Portraiture and an Argument.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE grace of the Lord Jesus, in appearing once more on the earth for the express purpose of converting Saul of Tarsus, made a deep and lasting impression on the heart of that eminent man. As it was in itself a most remarkable phenomenon, so it produced remarkable effects. Paul the Apostle gave himself to Christ. He studied with intense earnestness the character of the Saviour, and the redemption-work which he accomplished; and he yielded to the holy influences of the Gospel, in the spirit of full consecration. "For me to live is Christ," was his motto. And it was his history. It moulded his theology. It shaped his conduct.

It was the design of the writer, in the preparation of this volume, to furnish some illustration of these views of Paul's character, and to present the whole as an exhibition of the power of Christianity, and an argument for its truth.

J. M. C.

ERRATA.

Page 8, line 7 from bottom, for "*commenced*" read "*communed.*"

Page 10, line 5 from bottom (in the note), for "Χρηματίσας" read "Χρηματίσαι."

Page 11, last word (in the note), for "*Arts*" read "*Acts.*"

Page 32, line 8 from bottom, for "*Him*" read "*him.*"

Page 64, line 3 from bottom, for "*moun*" read "*mount.*"

Page 77, line 10 from bottom, for "*Him*" read "*him.*"

Page 85, line 10 from bottom, for "*ingeniously*" read "*ingenuously.*"

Page 107, line 5 from bottom, for "*privity*" read "*priority.*"

Page 112. The Latin quotation should read thus—

" . . . . video meliora, proboque;
Deteriora sequor . . . . "

Page 165. The mark of quotation (") shou'd be placed before the paragraph beginning "No doubt."

Page 168, line 10 from top, a colon should be inserted after the word "partisanship."

Page 181, line 10 from bottom, for "λίζα" read "λίβα."

CHAPTER I.

"HE MADE HAVOC OF THE CHURCH."

Chronology—Early Life of Paul—Residence at Jerusalem—His Persecution of the Christians—Conversion.

THE year of Paul's birth is unknown. He was "a young man" at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, which occurred A.D. 36. He was "aged" when he wrote the letter to Philemon, A.D. 62. The term "young" was very loosely employed, both by the Greeks and the Jews, and this increases the difficulty. Various conjectures have been hazarded; but, as none of them rest on authority, the point cannot be determined. Perhaps the most reasonable of the suppositions is that which places the date of the event at about the second year of the Christian era. Assuming this, we may construct a chronological table which will be sufficiently correct for our purpose. The object we have in view will not require

the application of minute criticism or the indulgence of antiquarian curiosity.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

A.D.

2. Birth of Saul at Tarsus.
Augustus, Emperor.
Annius Rufus, Governor of Judæa.
14. *Tiberius, Emperor.*
Valerius Gratus, Governor of Judæa.
17. Saul's Education at Jerusalem commenced.
25. *Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judæa.*
31. Pentecost—Christian Church formed.
35. *Marcellus, Governor of Judæa.*
36. Martyrdom of Stephen.
Marullus, Governor of Judæa.
37. *Caligula, Emperor.*
Persecution of Christians.
Conversion of Saul.
38—40. His residence in Arabia.
40. Return to Jerusalem.
40—43. Labours in Cilicia, &c.
41. *Claudius, Emperor.*
44. Saul joins Barnabas at Antioch.
Martyrdom of James.
Imprisonment and Deliverance of Peter.
Cuspius Fadus, Governor of Judæa.
45. Journey of Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.
46—47. Residence at Antioch.
46. *Tiberius Alexander, Governor of Judæa.*
48. Missionary Journey of Saul and Barnabas.
49. *Cumanus, Governor of Judæa.*
50. The so-called Council at Jerusalem.
51. Paul's Second Missionary Journey.
52. Expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius.
53. *Felix, Governor of Judæa.*
54. Paul's Third Missionary Journey.
Nero, Emperor.

A.D.
58. Paul arrested at Jerusalem.
58—60. Imprisonment at Cæsarea.
60. *Festus, Governor of Judæa.*
60. Paul's Voyage and Shipwreck (Autumn).
61—62. Imprisonment at Rome.
62. *Albinus, Governor of Judæa.*
63. Paul released.
63—68. His Labours in various parts of Europe and Asia.
64. The Great Fire of Rome—Persecution of the Christians there.
65. *Gessius Florus, Governor of Judæa.*
68. Paul Imprisoned again at Rome.
His Martyrdom.

Saul was a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, in which city a large number of Jews had resided for many years.* It was, probably, in consequence of some public services rendered, which were deemed worthy of reward, that his family enjoyed the rights and privileges of Roman citizenship. Saul was "free-born."

His father, as it should seem, was a man of good property and enlightened views. He gave his son the best education the times afforded. Having acquired the elements of general learning at Tarsus, where also he had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Grecian thoughts and subjects of thinking, he was sent to Jerusalem, and placed under the charge of Gamaliel, whose fame, as the most

* "No mean city" (Acts xxi. 39). The commerce was extensive, and the culture of the inhabitants liberal.

learned of the Jewish rabbis, was as wide as the Roman Empire.

There was, perhaps, a reason for this removal to the Jewish metropolis. Saul's father belonged to the Pharisees, the "straitest sect" of the Jews. They were scrupulously observant of every "jot and tittle" of the Mosaic institutions, and passionately attached to the "traditions of the elders." Perceiving his son's inquisitive turn of mind, the father feared that a longer residence in Tarsus might be injurious to his principles, as he might be likely to form acquaintance with members of Greek families, and thus be introduced to the follies, the philosophy, and, possibly, the religion of heathenism. The danger was to be avoided by exclusive devotion to Jewish studies and separation from all but Jewish society.

The plan was successful. The young man "profited in the Jews' religion above many his equals in his own nation" (Gal. i. 14). His morals were so well preserved that, "touching the righteousness which was in the law, he was blameless" (Phil. iii. 6). While his general proficiency was exceedingly gratifying to Gamaliel, the rabbi saw, with intense satisfaction, the zeal of his pupil for the national religion. The coldness and indifference of many, who hoped to advance their worldly interests by concessions to the Romans, had no effect upon him, but rather tended to stir up the patriotic fire that burned in his

bosom. Other young men might be attracted by the liberal views which were propagated by freethinking spirits, but Saul was firm to Moses. His talents and energy could not fail to be noticed. We may gather from some expressions in his speech before King Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 10, 11) that he had attained official rank, and had some share in the councils of the nation.

Jesus Christ repeatedly visited Jerusalem during Saul's residence there. His teachings and the miracles which He wrought were phenomena that could not fail to attract the attention of such a man, and presented problems very difficult of solution. It is not at all unlikely that he engaged in the discussions to which the singular claims of the new teacher gave rise, and warmly contended for Jewish conservatism. The death of the Galilæan prophet removed any doubts that might have troubled him; but the revival of His cause by His disciples, and the extraordinary events which followed the day of Pentecost, produced a disturbing effect. Yet, had not God spoken by Moses? Was there not irrefragable proof that the Mosaic institute was divine? Who were those men of Galilee,—those unlettered fishermen,—that they should dare to introduce innovations which, if successful, would overturn a system that had been sanctioned and sustained by a long succession of prophets, and upheld by the out-

stretched arm of the Almighty? That system was destined to perpetuity and universal influence over men. The covenant with Israel was never to be broken. Opposition to Moses was fighting against God. So strong were these convictions that the progress of the Christian Church and the "signs and wonders done by the Apostles" served only to strengthen the hostility which, from the beginning, had taken root in Saul's mind. It seemed to him a fit occasion for the execution of the law against false prophets, and a sense of duty impelled him to action. "I verily thought with myself," he said, many years afterwards, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9). True, he was influenced by a foregone conclusion. He did not allow himself to investigate and inquire, and, therefore, we condemn him, as, indeed, he himself subsequently confessed that he had grievously sinned against God in the whole affair. But at the time he was a conscientious bigot, a proud, self-satisfied inquisitor. His proceedings were of the severest character. He did not wait for information, but broke into houses and invaded the sanctity of synagogues. He was not contented with the arrest of heads of families: the women must be snatched from their children, and dragged with their husbands to prison. Nor was it enough to imprison, and fine, and confiscate. The utmost vengeance of the

law was invoked. Saul "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts ix. 1), and "when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them" (Acts xxvi. 10). It was a reign of terror in Jerusalem.

Then he "persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts xxvi. 11). Christianity seemed in danger of being crushed. But the Lord Jesus looked on—and pitied—and saved. He suffered the man of violence and blood to succeed so far as to bring the Church to the very brink of ruin, and then, when the Lord's servants were sinking into despair, He stopped him—stopped him in His own way—not by hurling him to destruction, but by pardoning his sin, changing his heart, and enlisting him in His service. "He is a chosen vessel unto me," said the Lord, "to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts ix. 15, 16). "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah vii. 18).

CHAPTER II.

"I LABOURED MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN THEY ALL."

Early Labours at Damascus—Return to Jerusalem—Retirement to Syria and Cilicia—Engagement with Barnabas at Antioch—Journey to Jerusalem—First Missionary Tour—Supposed Council at Jerusalem—Second Missionary Tour—Third Tour—Visit to Jerusalem—Arrest there—Imprisonment at Cæsarea—Voyage to Rome—Shipwreck—Detention at Rome—Release—Last Labours—Second Imprisonment—Martyrdom.

AFTER a short stay at Damascus, Saul withdrew into Arabia for a time: the purpose of that retirement is not mentioned; but, from scattered hints in his writings, it may be inferred that it was divinely arranged with a view to preparation for his future work. There he commenced with his own heart: and there he received manifestations of the Divine will. No previous Apostle instructed him in Christianity. He obtained his knowledge "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12). How that knowledge was communicated we are not informed; but Paul the Apostle vouches for the fact, and Paul

the Apostle always spoke "words of truth and soberness" (Acts xxvi. 25). On his return to Damascus he preached so zealously and effectively, that the Jews resorted to the usual tactics of the persecutor, and took measures to assassinate the man whose arguments they could not answer. They "watched the gates day and night to kill him" (Acts ix. 24). By friendly intervention he was enabled to make his escape, "through a window in a basket," being "let down by the wall" (2 Cor. xi. 33).

Repairing to Jerusalem, where he remained but fifteen days (Gal. i. 18), the brethren found it necessary to advise his departure, in consequence of another plot. The "Grecians," or Hellenists,—*i.e.* Greek-speaking Jews,—"went about to slay him; which, when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus (Acts ix. 29, 30).

We hear nothing of him then for several years. It was most probably at that period of his life that he itinerated extensively in Cilicia, Syria, and the neighbouring countries, and endured most of the hardships and sufferings which he afterwards described in his second letter to the Church at Corinth. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a

day I have been in the deep" (2 Cor. xi. 24, 25). During all those toils and trials, he was uncheered by brotherly sympathy. But he was under training for his life-work, the Lord himself superintending the process.

While thus engaged, the way was being prepared for him. Some of the disciples who had been "scattered abroad" preached the Gospel at Antioch to the heathen as well as to the Jews,* "and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 21). Barnabas was immediately despatched by the brethren from Jerusalem to Antioch. Under his earnest preaching, large additions were made to the new Church. More help was needed. Barnabas went to Tarsus in search of Saul, who cheerfully joined him. They jointly laboured there "a whole year," and great multitudes believed. But the world treated the adherents of the crucified One with derision. *Christ's men* were ridiculed and insulted; the name of the Saviour became a term of reproach, and "the disciples were called Christians† first in Antioch" (Acts xi. 26).

* The Authorised Version has "the Grecians," but the preponderance of manuscript authority is in favour of "Ελληνας, "Greeks." The Church at Antioch was the first Church in which Gentiles were admitted.

† *Χρηματίσαι.* The use of this word has led some to suppose that the Christians assumed the appellation by the Saviour's command; but the statement in the text is now generally accepted. "The inhabitants of Antioch were famous for their propensity to jeer and call names."—*Dean Alford, in loc.*

There were several "prophets and teachers" in the Church at Antioch. One day, "as they ministered to the Lord and fasted," a divine communication was made. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). Ready obedience was paid to the command. Leaving Antioch in the spring of the year 48, the missionaries took ship at Seleucia (the seaport of Antioch, now a heap of ruins), and sailed for Cyprus, Barnabas' native isle. They traversed the island from east to west, apparently without stopping to preach, till they reached Paphos (now *Baffa*), where the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, "desired to hear the word of God." He witnessed the punishment inflicted on Elymas the sorcerer, and "believed," not because he saw the magician struck with blindness, but "being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (v. 12). Paul* and Barnabas then crossed over to Pamphylia, and journeyed to Antioch in Pisidia (supposed to be identified with certain ruins bearing the name of *Yalobatah*), where

* This is the first time the name "Paul" occurs. Some have imagined that it was adopted out of compliment to Sergius Paulus; but it is much more likely that the Apostle "acquired this name like other Jews in that age, who, when they associated with foreigners, had often two names, the one Jewish the other foreign. . . . Being a native of a foreign city, as Lightfoot suggests, he may have borne the two names from early life." —*Hackett on the Acts.*

they preached, first to the Jews, and, on their rejection of the truth, to the Gentiles, and "the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region" (v. 19).

Driven away by persecution, they proceeded to Iconium (now *Konieh*). There also great success attended their labours. At length they were compelled to flee for their lives, and Lystra and Derbe* were next favoured with the glad tidings. At the former place, in consequence of the miraculous cure of a cripple, the preachers were regarded as deities; but the mob soon changed their minds, stoned Paul, and, dragging him out of the city, left him for dead. At the latter place they "taught many." On their return, they "ordained† them elders in every Church" (Acts xiv. 23). They then proceeded to the sea-coast, embarked at Attalia (now *Satalia*), and reached Antioch in Syria in safety, having been absent about a year.

Before engaging in his second tour, the Apostle went to Jerusalem as a member of a deputation from the Church at Antioch, sent to inquire as to the

* The sites of these towns are not satisfactorily determined.

† The word "ordained" does not refer to the ceremony of ordination, but to the appointment. Whether the Apostles took the appointment, in the first instance, into their own hands, or whether the Church, under their instructions, chose the officers and presented them for ordination, is not stated.

course proper to be pursued with converts from heathenism. Certain Jewish believers maintained that such persons ought to be circumcised and taught to observe the law of Moses. After much disputing, it was resolved to refer the question to "the apostles and elders" at Jerusalem. Their meeting has been usually termed, but not very appropriately, "the first Christian council;" for a council is a meeting of Churches by their delegates, whereas this was a meeting of the Church at Jerusalem to receive a communication from the Antioch Church and give advice. The Apostles might have decided the case at once, but, in their humility, they brought the matter before the whole Church; and the letter which was written at the close of the meeting was sent in the names of "the apostles and elders and brethren" (Acts xv. 23). The Gentile Christians were much gratified by the result. The temporary obligation to "abstain from pollutions of idols, and from things strangled, and from blood," out of deference to Jewish prejudices, was not felt to be burdensome; and the command to observe personal purity, so needful in heathen lands, where transgressions of this law involved scarcely any sense of guilt, was fully congenial with the feelings and desires of the regenerate.

Paul's second missionary journey was commenced soon after his return from Jerusalem, and occupied

him full three years. On this occasion Silas* was associated with him, an unhappy dispute having deprived him of the assistance of Barnabas. They passed through Syria and Cilicia, "confirming the churches." At Lystra they engaged Timothy in the work. The churches in Phrygia and Galatia were "established in the faith" by their joint labours, and "increased in number daily." They would have preached in the province of Asia (a small district, so called, at the western end of Asia Minor), in Mysia, and in Bithynia, but were mysteriously hindered; "the spirit of Jesus suffered them not."† Arriving at Troas (the ruins at *Eski-Stamboul* are all that is left of that place), they were guided by a vision to Macedonia. At Philippi (now in ruins), they laboured and suffered; and when they departed they left brethren there who nobly sustained the cause. At Thessalonica and Beræa (now Verria) many believed; but Paul was so obnoxious to Jewish bigotry that it was judged prudent to withdraw him for a time from communication with his fellow-countrymen in that quarter. He retired to Athens. There, though he was alone and unbefriended, he publicly declared the truth, to the Jews in their

* Silas was a prominent member of the Church at Jerusalem—one of the "chosen men" who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts xv. 25; xvi. 37).

† "So all the ancient MSS. and Versions" (Alford).

synagogue, to the Gentiles in the market-place. His apt and admirable discourse before the court of Areopagus was doubtless long remembered. Corinth was next evangelised. Paul remained there a year and six months, and the trophies of the grace of God were numerous. At the termination of that period the Apostle needed rest, having worked at his trade as a tent-maker, for the supply of his own wants and those of his brethren, and spent the Sabbaths, as well as much time in addition, in teaching the Word of God. He, therefore, left Corinth, and sailed for Syria. After a short stay at Jerusalem, he once more visited Antioch.

A brief sojourn with his brethren served to recruit his energies, and then he departed on a third journey, accompanied, as it would appear, by several disciples, among whom were Timothy and Erastus (Acts xix. 22). First, he "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts xviii. 23). Then, having taken a circuitous route, that he might preach the Gospel in the northern regions of Asia Minor, he took up his abode at Ephesus, and remained there upwards of two years. It was a bold step, for Ephesus was the head-quarters of Paganism. But the power of the Saviour was strikingly displayed. Great numbers received the truth, and such was its influence that those of them who had practised magical arts, and

found the trade gainful, "brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver"—about £1,770 sterling, or 8,272 dollars (Acts xix. 19). Demetrius, a silversmith, who seems to have been a wholesale manufacturer of models of the Temple of Diana, confessed that Paul had "persuaded and turned away much people," and that not only was there danger that their "craft" would be "set at nought," but also that "the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed" (Acts xix. 26, 27). From Ephesus the Apostle went to Macedonia, preaching and teaching in every place as he travelled along, till he reached Greece, where he remained three months. He was about to sail to Syria, probably from the Port of Cenchrea, when he learned that his implacable enemies, the unbelieving Jews, intended to waylay and murder him; in consequence of which he changed his route, and returned through Macedonia. Embarking at Philippi, in the spring of the year 58, he passed over to Troas, spent seven days with the Christians of that town; at Miletus* met the elders

* Once a flourishing seaport. The silting up of the River Mæander, at the mouth of which it lay, occasioned its gradual decay and ultimate ruin.

of the Church at Ephesus, and delivered an affecting farewell discourse (Acts xx. 18, 35), not expecting to see them again. "They all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more" (vv. 37, 38).

At Tyre, the disciples warned him not to go to Jerusalem, for it would be walking into the very jaws of danger. At Cæsarea, the prophet Agabus foretold the sufferings that awaited him. The brethren entreated him not to proceed any farther. But Paul replied, in the true spirit of Christian heroism, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xxi. 13). So he went up to Jerusalem.

The predictions were fulfilled. Paul was accused of profaning the Temple, of attempting to subvert the Jewish worship, and of endeavouring to set up Jesus as a pretender to the imperial throne. The prosecution was persevered in, absurd as were the charges, with a malignity characteristic of Jewish bigotry in that age. Having learned that a conspiracy was formed against his life, he communicated the information to the Roman commander, by whose order he was conveyed to Cæsarea, where the governor of the province then resided. Felix could

not condemn him, for he knew that he was innocent; and he was afraid to dismiss the case, because the Jews would have made it a matter of complaint to the Emperor. Money would have unfastened the chain, but Paul rightly demanded to be dealt with according to law. As there was no Habeas Corpus Act in those days, he was kept in prison at the will of the governor. At the lapse of two years, Felix meanly and unjustly left him in bonds, because he would "shew the Jews a pleasure" (Acts xxiv. 27). As soon as his successor, Festus, arrived, the case was reopened; but the prosecutors failed of success. As a last resort, they required that there should be a new trial, intending to procure Paul's assassination on the road. He asserted his privilege as a Roman citizen by appealing to the Emperor, and was sent to Rome, where he arrived in the spring of 61, after a perilous voyage, during which he was shipwrecked on the Island of Malta (see APPENDIX, No. I.) At Rome he was treated with more kindness and consideration than might have been expected, for "he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31).

There is some difference of opinion respecting

the subsequent history of Paul. The majority of modern critics and theologians have come to the conclusion that, at the end of his two years' imprisonment, he was hear' before the Emperor, acquitted, and released, and that he spent nearly five years more in labouring for Christ. It is probable that he visited Spain, and planted Christianity there. Whether his labours extended to the north-western shores of Europe is more doubtful. The scanty notices contained in his letters appear to warrant the supposition that, in the latter years of his life, he was chiefly occupied in tours of apostolic inspection, for the purpose of regulating the affairs of the Churches, and opposing the erroneous teachers whose influence had already begun to be painfully felt. Timothy and Titus received special commissions; the former was stationed for a time at Ephesus, the latter in the island of Crete; and the object of both appointments was to preserve the Christians of those districts from the snares of error. In Macedonia, in Greece, and in Asia Minor, "Paul the aged" once more proclaimed the truth. But the enemy was permitted to prevail. He was again arrested, we know not on what charge, and conveyed to Rome. This second imprisonment was more rigorous than the first, for Christians were now generally hated, and Nero, the Roman emperor, persecuted them with savage cruelty. No man's life was

safe in those days. Paul soon learned that he was doomed to die. At his first hearing he stood alone before the tribunal. "All men forsook me," is his affecting statement of the case (2 Tim. iv. 16). But he gratefully records the Master's interposition on his behalf (v. 17). It was but a short respite. He was condemned and executed in the spring of the year 68. Nero did not long survive his victim. (See APPENDIX No. II.)

CHAPTER III.

WHO WAS CHRIST?

Effects of the Vision on Saul's Mind—New Thoughts of Christ—His Person—His Work—Influence of these Thoughts on Paul's Labours.

It is said that, when Saul was restored to sight, after his entry into Damascus, and had been baptized, he "straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20). This expression marks an era in the history of his opinions and feelings. The Jews had long expected the Messiah. They looked for Him, in accordance with the prophecies, as a descendant from David. "What think ye of Christ?" our Lord said to the Pharisees; "whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David" (Matt. xxii. 42). But they did not understand how He could be at the same time David's Son and David's Lord. Their expectations were all centred on a governor and a general, one who would lead their hosts to victory, and then pre-

side over the nation in wisdom and righteousness. Their hopes were earthly. All they cared for was plenty of silver and gold, and costly array, and overflowing stores of wine and oil, and all manner of delicacies, with well-paid offices and appointments, enabling them to live like princes. But the blinding stroke that felled Saul of Tarsus to the earth was followed by enlightening influences and visions of spiritual glory. The first effect produced on his mind was a total change of views respecting the Christ. He dropped all the wild fancies which had amused and dazzled him; he gave up his ambitious longings. He bowed before the Son of God, and meekly said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

As fast as he learned he taught. The disciple quickly became a preacher. He went from synagogue to synagogue, proclaiming with fervour and power to which his countrymen were altogether unused—as far removed as possible from the drowsy drawlings of the scribes—that the Christ had come, and that He was not a man of war, but the Son of God. That epithet awoke new thoughts. It is not likely that its full import was at first apprehended, either by Saul himself or by his hearers. But it conveyed grand and glorious ideas, pointing to gracious purposes. Had "the Son of God" come? Surely His errand must be befitting His glory. He had "come down from heaven" (John iii. 13). He was

"made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. i. 3). He had walked the plain of Gennesareth and climbed the hills of Judæa, in all appearance as a man, like those among whom He lived. And He *was* a man—not a phantasm, as the Gnostics afterwards dreamed, but really and truly "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." Yet, hidden beneath the human exterior lay the divine. Every action was a divine-human action. When the leprosy disappeared at His touch, and the sightless eyeballs were enlightened, and the waves were stilled and the winds hushed, and the dead rose up at His bidding, there was a flashing forth of the power and goodness of God. He was "in very deed dwelling with men upon the earth" (2 Chron. vi. 18). He spoke and wrought by His Son. The Father and the Son were "one" (John x. 30).

"THE SON OF GOD!" What did those words mean? Can anyone explain them? Did the great Apostle himself understand and know "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height"? (Eph. iii. 18). Did he offer any explanation? Did he define, distinguish, or prescribe hard and complicated forms? No! The days of Athanasius had not come. Christians had not yet learned to "darken counsel by words without knowledge" (Job xxxviii. 2). Metaphysical subtleties had not taken the place of Scripture. Paul's religion began with submission to the

will of the Lord. It characterised him all his life long. He was content that God should make Himself known in His own way and to such an extent as He pleased. He believed, adored, and loved. Enough for him that the Son of God had come. Thus he wrote of Him: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: because in Him were all things created, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things have been created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and in Him all things subsist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He may be the first" (Col. i. 15—18). —*Alford.*

But why did He come? That inquiry engaged the Apostle's attention during the whole of his subsequent life, and the solution is interwoven in the texture of all his writings. He seems to be continually answering the question, "Why did Christ come?" and putting the reply into every possible shape. It is reasonable to suppose—whatever was the method of discovery, of which we know nothing—that the first disclosures on this subject took place in the desert of Arabia, or, at any rate, were mainly completed there. There God "revealed His Son in

him" (Gal. i. 16). The process of enlightenment, which had been begun at Damascus, was carried on in the wilderness "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." When he returned to the city he had graduated in Christ's college, and was prepared for any work which his Master might assign him—while still continuing his theological studies—for Paul's life was ever a student's life.

We see the exemplification of these peculiarities in his early missionary labours. The longest report we have of a sermon of his is that which was taken at Antioch, in Pisidia, and transmitted by the historian Luke. That sermon is an admirable compendium of the Gospel. It is a plain statement of facts. Jesus died. He rose again from the dead. He was "delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). Those who would be saved must not rely on obedience to the law of Moses, although its precepts were divine. There were some sins from which they could not be justified by the law, and salvation, such as Moses could not promise or procure, was provided in Christ. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 26—39).

On these points Paul loved to dwell. He looked back on the Lord's life, so lovely, so pure, so self-denying. He saw Him "fulfilling all righteousness"

(Matt. iii. 15). He watched His sinking into the grave, and His revival, and His "ascending up where He was before" (John vi. 62). He followed Him into the heavenly glory, and saw Him by the eye of faith sitting on the right hand of God, making intercession for the Church and wielding the sceptre of empire. He was calmed and comforted by the sight. He felt that the interests of the Church were safe in the hands of Christ. At one time he had thought that the Lord would shortly appear, to punish His foes and reward His friends; but he had been taught to expect a long series of ages of apostacy, during which the Evil One would make trial of all possible vexations and guiles, thinking to "wear out the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 25), but without success. At length, the Christ "shall be revealed from Heaven, with His mighty angels" (2 Thess. i. 7—10). "Then," said the Prophet-Apostle, "cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. xv. 24). Yet, still, for untold myriads of ages, will the development be going on, and at the close of the longest period of which created mind can have any conception, the question will continue to be asked, "WHO WAS CHRIST?"

CHAPTER IV.

"THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD."

Saul's Pharisee Life—His Remarkable Change of Views—The Propitiation: how Contemplated by Him—His Exposition and Defence of the Doctrine.

NOTHING was so galling to the Pharisees of Jerusalem as to be classed with other people. They claimed exemption from the ordinary evils under which humanity groans. They judged themselves to be better than other men. They magnified the virtues which they affected, and concealed or denied all immoral habits. The ignorant multitude were despised by them because they were ignorant ("this people who knoweth not the law are cursed"—John vii. 49); but no attempts were made to enlighten and reclaim them. Rulers and the ruled travelled the broad road together, all imagining that something was to be done to inherit eternal life, and that they were doing it, or supposing that they were safe, because "Abraham was their father."

Such were the thoughts of Saul of Tarsus in the early years of his history. Then he was "alive without the law" (Rom. vii. 9), for he did not discern its spiritual meaning. He satisfied himself with externals. He "paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin." He observed the days of worship and the hours of prayer. He was scrupulously exact in the performance of ceremonies, taking care that not the smallest item should be neglected. All admired him, for he was deemed without fault before men. But "when the commandment came" (Rom. vii. 9)—probably during the memorable three days at Damascus—his heart died within him. He saw sin. He felt it. He "mourned apart;" and "repented in dust and ashes." "Sin revived, and I died" (Rom. vii. 9). His earnest hopes were dashed to the ground. He saw himself condemned, righteously condemned. He sunk down to the publican's level, and while he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his distress, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" he saw not at first how mercy could be bestowed, and did not venture to hope for the blessing.

But relief was at hand. The spirit convinced him "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8), and he learned to rejoice in the "faithful saying," which is "worthy of all acceptation," that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). He took no higher ground. That

was high enough. How astonishing the mercy that permitted him to stand there! Then came light, and love, and largeness of heart. Not all at once, perhaps, but as he was able to bear it. The beginning was at Damascus. There were deep searchings of heart in the desert. On his return to Jerusalem, full of gratitude and zeal, the strong emotions of his soul overpowered him as he prayed in the Temple, and he fell into a trance, in which he saw in the clearest light the sin of his former enmity to the Lord, and longed for the opportunity of proclaiming salvation to his former companions and friends. How he pleaded! The Lord said, "They will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." "Lord," he replied, "they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: and when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. . . . Let me go among them, and say, 'Be ye reconciled unto God.'" But it was not the Master's will at that time. "Depart," he said, "for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts xxii. 17—21). So he went forth. What, and how did he preach? And how did he instruct believers?

An answer to these questions would require a full analysis of his writings. A general sketch only can

be given here. Some branches of the subject may be considered hereafter more in detail.

David's words, "I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalm xvi. 8), may be fitly applied to Paul, in reference to Christ. From that wonderful interview on the plain of Damascus to the day of his death, he set the Lord Jesus always before him. He lived as in the Great Master's presence. And he lived for Christ. Eloquence, learning, all mental and moral qualifications, were consecrated to one object—the subjection of men to the Saviour. At Corinth, at Ephesus, and wherever else he laboured, he "shewed and taught publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 20, 21). Other teachers might seek praise and pelf, and take small pains to disguise their selfishness. Paul said, and his fellow-labourers caught his spirit, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. iv. 5).

Preaching Christ was more than telling the story of the Saviour's life. It included the purpose of His coming. Paul could have described in the most effective manner the scenes of the Lord's last sufferings. Possibly he witnessed them—the mockings, the scourgings, the brutal outrages. Perhaps he was present when Peter denied his Master, and "the Lord

turned, and looked on Peter." He saw Him "on the cross uplifted high." Did he join in the revilings that were poured on the Innocent One? "I was a blasphemer," he said, more than thirty years afterwards (1 Tim. i. 13). Be that as it may, he knew all the facts; but he had now learned to view them in God's light. On man's part, that death was a foul murder. On God's part, it was an act of marvellous love.

The propitiation was a central truth in Paul's system. He taught everywhere that "all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). He saw clearly that no sinner could save his own soul, and that man lay helpless and hopeless at the feet of divine mercy. He beheld in the death of the Lord Jesus that wondrous plan by which God could be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26); by which jarring interests could be reconciled, and seeming impossibilities accomplished, without detriment to principles and rights. The cross of Christ was to him the meeting-place between heaven and earth. The Saviour's death was that "great public transaction," as Bunyan was wont to call it, whereby God became able to pardon sin without doing injustice to law and government, and at the same time to secure the obedience and submission of the pardoned, and to "purify unto Himself

a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 14).

Men had gazed on the crucifixion with very different feelings. Some looked on savagely, and cursed. Others, though they did not justify the deed, feared to blame it. Those who "mourned and wept" were ready to abandon themselves to despair. Saul himself, if present, as was hinted just now, did most likely concur with the chief priests and rulers of the people, comforting himself with the assurance that by an act of necessary severity the peace of society would be preserved, and injured authority restored.

A few years passed away, and we find him again at Jerusalem. But, oh, how changed! With what affectionate reverence does he now speak of Jesus! How eagerly does he question those who had seen and heard Him, and who could repeat His "gracious words"! And when he revisits Calvary, what emotions crowd in upon his soul! The meek and lowly One who bled there had died for *Him!* In that shameful death on the cross the price of his redemption was paid. Jesus was "delivered for his offences." Others looked upon the cross as the type of all ignominy. Paul saw in it nothing but love and joy." "God forbid," he said, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14). His life-work, begun at

Damascus, was the mission of the cross. How he fulfilled it is well known to the world.

Let us gather together a few of those heavenly utterances in which the Apostle set forth the truth of the redemption, and magnified the grace of God.

"Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."—1 Thess. v. 10.

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."—1 Cor. v. 7.

"Ye are bought with a price."—1 Cor. vi. 20.

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."—1 Cor. xi. 26.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."—1 Cor. xv. 3.

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."—2 Cor. v. 21.

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world."—Gal. i. 4.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood."—Rom. iii. 25.

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."—Rom. iv. 25.

"Christ died for the ungodly."—Rom. v. 6.

"By whom we have now received the atonement."—Rom. v. 11.

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak

through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."—Rom. viii. 3.

"To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."—Rom. xiv. 9.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Col. i. 14: Eph. i. 7.

"Having made peace through the blood of His cross."—Col. i. 20.

"Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."—Eph. ii. 13.

"God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—Eph. iv. 32.

"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."—Eph. v. 2.

"Who gave Himself a ransom for all."—1 Tim. ii. 6.

The substance of the whole is, "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11). Every blessing bestowed on man, from the forgiveness of sin to the attainment of life eternal, is traced to the redemption-work. In what way that great transaction operated; how it was that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19), is nowhere stated

with the scholastic precision of theology. Our Christian classics are not composed in that style. It was not invented in apostolic times. Had God so pleased, it might have been then invented, and then the authors of the New Testament would have been tied and bound by the crude phraseology of the schools. That misfortune did not happen to them. The glorious old book is known by its peculiar depth of thought and breadth of expression. It has a method all its own, and refuses to be confined within human limits. The Apostle Paul is the most illustrious instance of this nobleness and freedom. Nothing can be grander than his delineations of the grace of God in Christ. He is a true champion-knight, and will maintain the cause against all comers. Yet he does not demand that everyone shall adopt the same phrases, and measure words and syllables by unchanging rule. His writings afford examples of variety of statement combined with unswerving zeal for truth; in which respect it would have been well if all who profess to admire him had trodden in his steps.

The subject of this chapter is the representation uniformly given by Paul of the purpose for which the Son of God became incarnate. We have seen that in his scheme of doctrine man appears as ruined —self-destroyed—lost. But God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to.

our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9). In another place it is thus powerfully expressed:—"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 11—13).

Some would have us believe that the death of the Lord Jesus is an example of patience, and submission, and religious heroism; but nothing more. That, according to Paul, would be "another gospel." He had not so "learned Christ." "I delivered unto you first of all," he said to the Corinthians, "that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). Yes! He "died for our sins." Such is the Pauline doctrine. And Peter writes of the "precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 19), of which John says that it "cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7). Conceited reasoners exclaim, "How can these things be?" It is an easy thing, as some think, for God to forgive sin: it would be strange if He did not: He is so loving and kind that He cannot find it in His heart to punish transgressors. There is no such place as hell. It will be all heaven here-

after, and all men will be there. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20). He says, by the mouth of his servant Paul, that there shall be "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 8, 9): and He has expressly affirmed that, in order to accomplish His merciful purpose of salvation, there was a necessity for the sacrificial death of the Son of God. (See Heb. ii. 10.) Jesus died for our sins, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth" (Rom. iii. 26). So Christ Himself taught Paul, and Paul taught the Churches.

CHAPTER V.

"A NEW CREATURE."

Saul's Friendships in Jerusalem—The Influence of Christianity in that respect—Constant Reference to Christ in his Writings—His Energetic Love to the Saviour—Contrast between his Early Life and his Apostolic Doctrines and Habits—His Firmness—His Considerateness and Gentle Spirit—The Corinthians—Philemon—His Humility.

WHILE Saul lived in Jerusalem, and was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers," his friendships were governed by his peculiarly Jewish tastes. He was an ardent devotee of Moses and the elders, and his chosen companions were found among the devotees. Those young men, who endeavoured to curry favour with the Romans by conforming to their modes and fashions, were never admitted to his intimacy. But he "walked to the house of God in company" with the religious conservatives—perhaps, we might say, the ritualists—of his day. Many and animated were their conferences and discussions on ceremonial, methods of purify-

ing, and topics of that sort. The more rigid the adherence of his young friends to the strict letter of the law or the tradition, the better he liked them. The circle of his acquaintance was not large, but it was well defined. In the centre stood the great Rabbi Gamaliel, at whose feet he sat with reverent attention, and by whose kindness and affability his heart was deeply moved. He was enthusiastic in his praises of the Rabbi. Gamaliel was not only "had in reputation among all the people" (Acts v. 34), but was well-nigh adored by his pupils, who loved one another in proportion as each honoured their master.

How was all this changed when Paul transferred his allegiance to Christ, and chose Him for his teacher and Lord! Thenceforth, men and things were tried by another standard. He had friends still: he could not live without friends. But they were now taken from a very different class. Some were Jews: some were Greeks: it mattered little to him to what country they belonged, or by what national name they were known. He had learned that in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Col. iii. 11). His prayer was, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" (Eph. vi. 24). If any man was a friend of Christ, he was Paul's friend. His

brethren were endeared to him according as they manifested sympathy with the Saviour and displayed activity in His cause. Hence it became customary to advert to those characteristic features when he had occasion to mention any of his Christian brethren, or to send his salutations. A striking instance occurs in the Epistle to the Romans. The last chapter contains numerous messages to believers at Rome. Observe how he describes them. Priscilla and Aquila were his "helpers in Christ Jesus" (v. 3); Epænetus was "the firstfruits of Achaia* unto Christ" (v. 5). Andronicus and Junia were his "kinsmen and his fellow-prisoners, who were of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before him" (v. 7). Amplias was his "beloved in the Lord," and Urbane his "helper in Christ" (vv. 8, 9). Apelles was undoubtedly an amiable, well-principled, useful man, whom the brethren loved and honoured; but the highest distinction that man could attain had fallen to his lot—he was "approved in Christ" (v. 10). The household of Narcissus were doubtless distinguished by excellent qualities, and connected with good society in Rome: Paul greeted them because they were "in the Lord" (v. 11). Tryphena and Tryphosa are placed in the honourable list for no other reason than that they

* It should be "Asia," according to the best authorities.

"laboured in the Lord"; and "the beloved Persis" is singled out from the whole because she "laboured much in the Lord" (v. 12). We know nothing of Rufus, save that his father, Simon the Cyrenian ("the father of Alexander and Rufus"—Mark xv. 21) bore the Redeemer's cross on the way to Golgotha: Paul knew—and that was enough—that he was "chosen in the Lord" (v. 13).

Of whomsoever the Apostle spoke or wrote, the connection which the individual had with Christ was the uppermost thought in his mind. Apollos and himself were "ministers of Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 1). Timotheus was his "beloved son, and faithful in the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 17). Tychicus, who was evidently an estimable man, was especially so, inasmuch as he was "a faithful minister in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 21). Epaphras is adverted to in a similar strain (Col. i. 7). Fidelity to Christ was sure to win Paul's affection.

It was not always so. When the first martyr sealed the truth with his blood, being "faithful unto death," the witnesses, on whom it devolved to commence the process of the execution,* "laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was

* The witnesses were required to cast the first stone, the sufferer being first thrown down. The rabbinical writers say that one of the witnesses threw a large stone on the chest of the convict. If it did not cause death, the bystanders proceeded to complete the sentence.—*Smith's Dictionary.*

Saul" (Acts vii. 58), and who was well pleased to take any share, however humble, in that murderous deed. His hatred of Christ extended to all his followers, and he placed before himself, as the work of his life, the extinction of the Christian family. He would, perhaps, have succeeded, had not a mightier will than his own interposed. Then, subdued by grace, he gave his whole heart to the Redeemer, and cherished for Christ's people an affection as earnest and powerful as his previous hate had been. Paul did nothing by halves; he loved with fervour, he hated with intensity. Only there was this difference between his Jewish and his Christian state—his love while a Jew was lavished on those who agreed with him in the forms of religion; his Christian love was given to character—it embraced all Christians. And his hatred was quite a different thing. As a Jew, he hated all Gentiles and all followers of Christ. When he became a Christian, his fellow-countrymen hated him, and plotted his death. But he did not reciprocate the feeling. He hated sin with all his might; he yearned over the sinner with tenderest compassion. How sublimely touching his language! "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the

flesh." "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. ix. 1—3; x. 1). Then, again, speaking of some unholy professors of Christianity, he uses these remarkable words: "Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. iii. 18). It was their practical enmity to Christ that excited the deep feelings of his soul; but he did not curse them. Jesus had taught him to pity, to pray, and to bless.

When the Apostle, defending himself against the furious multitude in the court of the Temple, asserted that the Lord Jesus had said to him, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence among the Gentiles," it is stated by the historian that "they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts xxii. 21, 22). What strange perversions and contradictions are found in human character! These men had in their possession the books of the Old Testament, or heard them read every Sabbath in the synagogues. Their royal psalmist had foretold that "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him" (Psalm xxii. 27). The prophet Isaiah had repeatedly described the kingdom of the Messiah as intended to embrace all nations

(Chaps. xxv. 6, 7; xlii. 1; xlix. 9; liv.; lx.) Other prophets had indited similar strains. As Simeon held in his arms the infant Redeemer, he exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke ii. 29—32). But the Jews misunderstood and misapplied their own Scriptures. They would not hear of the union of Jew and Gentile in God's Church. Nothing but submission and conformity to Moses would satisfy them. The Gentiles might be hewers of wood and drawers of water, but members of God's family, never! This is represented as their crowning sin—"forbidding to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved" (1 Thess. ii. 16).

It is so represented by one who was for many years in full accord with them on that point. He was as bigoted as any of them. But when the Lord "by revelation made known unto him the mystery . . . that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Eph. iii. 3, 6), he devoted himself, without hesitation, to the special mission of his life. He opened his commission in the synagogue ("to you, first," as Peter said—Acts iii. 26), and when it was rejected there he turned

with mingled sorrow and gladness to the Gentiles. In preaching to them, and afterwards, in his correspondence, he manifested the utmost freedom. The shackles of Judaism were entirely thrown off. He was a citizen of the world, in the highest, purest sense. He delighted to dwell on the participation of all nations in the privileges of the Gospel. He gloried in the fact, that the Church of Christ, gathering in its ample embrace men of every land, is one body, animated by one spirit. So impressed was he with this, the peculiar excellence of Christianity, that he rarely preached a sermon or wrote a letter without a reference to it. He grieved over the unbelief and hardness of heart of his fellow-countrymen, and would have done or endured anything for the sake of their souls' health; but he never forgot the distinction which the Saviour had conferred upon him, and, as "the Apostle of the Gentiles," he "magnified his office" (Rom. xi. 13). What a contrast to the man who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and prided himself on being "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. iii. 5)! What a mighty revolution had taken place in his opinions, his feelings, and his habits! Verily, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17).

This inquiry may be pursued further. The "elders" who flourished after the Babylonish captivity had

added to the services enjoined in the law a vast number of minor observances, which were regarded as binding, and to which the Jews generally had submitted. They were rigidly enforced by the Pharisees, in whose religious system they occupied a prominent place (see Mark vii. 1—9). The result was, as it has ever been, and the history of the Church confirms the statement, that the Word of God was slighted. Jesus sharply reproved the scribes and Pharisees of His time: "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. xv. 6).

Young Saul was distinguished for his attachment to all Jewish rites, ceremonies, and usages—the human as well as the divine. He did not stop to inquire whether there was any authority for the later additions to the ritual and the code. The fact that he found them in practice satisfied him. The necessity of obedience was taken for granted. They were fully developed in his religious life. He "made broad his phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of his garments" (Matt. xxiii. 5). He fasted at all the prescribed times; he observed the accustomed hours of prayer; he avoided all personal defilement by contact with anything unclean, and washed his hands and bathed, according to the commands of the elders.

All this seemed to him very right and very re-

ligious, and Saul was regarded as a devout and promising young man, who was likely to become a rabbi. But he became a Christian, and obtained holiness of another kind. Then, how different were his views of human forms and ceremonies and presumed religious services! With what pity did he look down on the weaklings who wished to introduce will-worship into Christianity! And how did he abhor the spirit by which many were actuated, who were disposed to exact uniformity in such minor matters, and to anathematise all who refused compliance! "The kingdom of God," he said, "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). "Bodily exercise profiteth little" (1 Tim. iv. 8). He foretold that the great apostasy would be distinguished by such follies. At the same time, he was anxious to preserve peace and union among the brethren, and would rather that a Christian should indulge the weakness of a feeble-minded one than offend him by harsh behaviour (1 Cor. viii. 9—13; x. 23—33).

We might have expected that, whatever course of life he chose to adopt, he would be known by determination, energy, disregard of the opinions and feelings of others, a fierce wilfulness, verging on oppression. Now, Paul could be firm on all proper occasions, and he was not slow to exercise apostolic authority. If Peter himself temporised, Paul did not

spare him (Gal. ii. 11—21). If Judaisers sought to "pervert the Gospel of Christ," he was prompt to repress them: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8). If immoralities were connived at, he commanded the instant application of the knife of discipline (1 Cor. v. 1—5). If Christian professors were found feasting in an idol's temple, they were sternly told that they "could not be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. x. 21). If a Christian ordinance was corrupted, the offenders were reminded that "whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 29).

But, on the other hand, there was a considerate gentleness of spirit which we should not have looked for in such a man. He was indignant at the conduct of the Corinthians in suffering a man who was guilty of an act of gross immorality to remain in membership; yet when, as afterwards appeared, the man was smitten with sorrow and gave proof of repentance, and the Church had manifested meek submission to the apostolic command, he hastened to assure all parties of his forgiveness, and to direct the restoration of the penitent to his position in the Church. Nothing could be more offensive to him

than the deviation from the truth which had taken place in the Churches of Galatia, and they were severely dealt with accordingly. Nevertheless, what fatherly love appears in the very mode of address adopted by him ("My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" —Gal. iv. 19)! He had been calumniated at Corinth, and violent efforts were made to damage and destroy his influence in that Church. It was necessary to defend himself, and he did so most triumphantly. Who has not noticed and admired the dexterous mildness of his defence? He was almost ashamed, he said, to write as he did; it was egotistical; it looked like "folly" and "confidence of boasting." And was it not an exquisite turn when he said, "What is it wherein ye were inferior to other Churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong" (2 Cor. xii. 13—15).

He was sometimes placed in circumstances which required the exercise of what we may call *Christian adroitness;* and he was equal to the emergency. He displayed so much judgment in his address to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, so carefully abstaining from all offensiveness of manner,* that he was dismissed

* Our Authorised Version represents him as telling them that they were "too superstitious." Dean Alford's translation, "very religious," will be now preferred. "*Trop dévots.*"—*Beausobre et L'Enfant.*"

without even a reproof. At Philippi, when the magistrates had exceeded their powers, he so skilfully managed the affair that they were glad to escape a prosecution by respectfully requesting the outraged missionaries to go quietly away. At Jerusalem, he refused to be illegally scourged, asserting his rights and privileges as a Roman citizen, and successfully maintained his protest. And then, with what address he spoke to the raging mob! How anxious he was, by adopting a conciliatory tone, to gain a hearing! "I am verily a man which am a Jew," he said, "born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day" (Acts xxii. 3). Speaking of Ananias, who restored his sight at Damascus, he is careful to describe him as "a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there" (Acts xxii. 12). On his appearance the next day before the Sanhedrim, where an act of violence like that by which Stephen lost his life would not have been at all unlikely to occur, he diverted the attention of his judges from the real point at issue by exclaiming, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee!" (Acts xxiii. 6), and thus exciting the fury of hostile sects, who were content for that time to abstain from further proceedings, or rather prevented by the

judicious interference of the Roman commander of the forces.

Once more. This man, who was so fond of power, and would press through all difficulties to accomplish his will, could be as gentle as a child if in that way his object might be more easily gained. Did he not, with consummate tact, plead with the Corinthians for a liberal contribution to the collection for the poor saints? He reminded them of "the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor. viii. 1); and then he told them that this liberality of the Macedonians had been mainly produced by the report which he himself had conveyed to them respecting Achaia (2 Cor. ix. 2—4). The inimitable letter to Philemon affords another illustration. He had a favour to ask. He might have exerted apostolic authority, but he preferred, "for love's sake," to beseech rather than to command; and in placing the object of his request before his friend, he so constructed the sentence that Philemon, as we may well believe, was prepared to grant all that the Apostle asked before the name of him on whose behalf he was entreating met his eyes: "I beseech thee, for my son, whom I have begotten in my chains, Onesimus" (*Conybeare and Howson*).* Surely the lion was changed into a lamb!

* "A son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus" (*Doddridge*). Dr. D. observes: "Thus the words stand in the original;

Some observations may be introduced here on gratitude and humility as constituent elements of Paul's character. They are coupled together, because they are generally found in union. A proud man magnifies himself, and loathes obligation. Grateful acknowledgment of indebtedness to another betokens and expresses humility.

A consciousness of intellectual power sometimes begets vanity and pride. The exalted one looks down upon his fellows, and "his heart is lifted up." Like the Prince of Tyre, he is "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty" (Ezek. xxviii. 12). But true greatness is allied with modesty and humble bearing, and these are invariably the fruits of piety.

The life of Paul furnishes striking illustrations of these tendencies and effects. He was one of the great men of his age—great in talent—great in moral qualities—great in goodness of disposition—and withal one of the most humble-minded.

The mercy of God in pardoning his sins, convert-

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and I thought it incumbent on me to preserve that order, because it keeps the mind in an agreeable suspense, and has a fine effect, which every reader of taste will quickly perceive."

"Onesimus may have been standing in person before his master, and yet Philemon never have surmised the object of the letter till he reached the name so skilfully introduced. Supported by such an advocate, and knowing the character of the man in whose hands he had consented to place himself again, the fugitive could present the letter in silence, and await the result without anxiety."—*Dr. Hackett, in Lange's Commentary.*

ing his soul, and especially in employing him in Gospel labour, made a deep and permanent impression. He retained the feeling to the last, and delighted to confess "the grace of the Lord," which was "exceeding abundant" (1 Tim. i. 14). Thus humbly, within a year or so of his death, does he speak of that wonderful event — unspeakably wonderful to him, because he was brought into "marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9). "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. i. 12). And how many desponding souls have been relieved and comforted by the declarations next following: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first ("*as chief*"—*Ellicott*) Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 15, 16).

All graces shone in Paul: He "came behind in no gift," for he "spake with tongues more than" all others, and "the signs of an Apostle," the "signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds," attested the reality of his divine call (1 Cor. i. 7; xiv. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 12). The brightness of his Christian character, too, called

forth admiration. At the beginning, Christian men who saw the astonishing change that had been wrought, "glorified God in him" (Gal. i. 24): and throughout his whole life the esteem in which he was held by the brethren was unmistakably displayed. But, while others gazed and admired, what were the convictions of the good man's soul? We find them recorded in his letter to the Church of Ephesus: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8). Was ever self-abasement more emphatically expressed? There is another instance of his humility, scarcely less striking, in 1 Cor. xv. 9: "I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."

He was "in labours more abundant" (2 Cor. xi. 23). He undertook cheerfully the most toilsome duties. No danger appalled him. He shrunk from no suffering. There is an unexampled catalogue in 2 Cor. xi. 24—27. Did he boast of all this? Did he set himself up as a pattern of ardour and endurance? Was he like Jehu, who exclaimed, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord of hosts" (2 Kings x. 16)? So far from it, he writes in the humblest strain: "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10). Did he speak well and wisely, with

sanctified, spirit-stirring eloquence? It was "Christ speaking in him" (2 Cor. xiii. 3). Did he bear privations and pains without murmuring? He gives a Christian explanation of it: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 12, 13). Did the "thorn in the flesh" pierce him? And was it the Master's will that it should remain? That same Lord graciously supported His servant, and then he could say, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me: I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). Many years afterwards, when he was in bonds at Rome, he writes in the same undaunted spirit: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh* for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24).

At length the hour of martyrdom drew near. He stood before the imperial tribunal. Nothing abashed, he boldly proclaimed the truth, and

* "The personal sufferings of Jesus are over, but His sufferings in His people still continue. They are still defective: for much remains to be endured in this world. The Apostle, in suffering for the sake of the Church, felt that he was filling up the measure of those afflictions."—*Eadie, in loc.*

preached the Gospel before the full court. His last letter to his beloved Timothy (probably the last effort of his pen) records the fact, and unconsciously chronicles apostolic lowliness. It was not Paul. It was Christ. "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known" (2 Tim. iv. 17).

This was the man who had "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts ix. 1). But he "obtained mercy."

CHAPTER VI.

"CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE."

Union between Christ and Believers—Imitation of Christ, a Christian Characteristic—Resemblance of Paul to Jesus—Piety—Meekness—Anxiety for the Salvation of his Countrymen—Hatred of Hypocrisy—Love of Goodness—Poverty—Prayer—Special favour of Christ to Paul—Illustrations—Paul's loving Trust in Christ, and his singular attachment to Him.

In several passages of his epistles the Apostle speaks of Christ and believers as ineffably united, as constituting one body, and so identified with each other that their interests are the same. He goes so far as to affirm that the Saviour's death was their death—that they died in Him—and that, consequently, when He rose from the dead, they rose in and with Him—His resurrection was theirs. He acted and suffered as their representative. His work was their work, and the blessing and the reward are theirs, because they are His. These statements appear to be justified by the following expressions:—"dead with Christ;" "God . . . hath quickened us together

with Christ;" "Christ's love constraineth us, having judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should live no longer unto themselves, but unto Him which died and rose again for them"—*Alford* (Rom. vi. 8; Eph. ii. 4, 5; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15). The meaning is, that those on whose behalf the Lord died, died in Him. The law was satisfied in the work of the Mediator, and the application of the benefit took effect when they believed. So it is stated in Rom. iii. 25. The propitiation was made when the Redeemer died; it becomes ours "through faith in His blood." It is not merely true that the believer is pardoned for Christ's sake, although that is the fact; but the atonement which He accepts is His own. It is as if He Himself had met the demands of the broken law, and accomplished the reconciliation. When Christ died, he died in Christ. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

The personal restoration of a sinner to God is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. iii. 5). Now, the gift of the Spirit was the result and the reward of the redemption. Jesus promised to send the Spirit after His ascension, and the promise was fulfilled. All holy dispositions and

habits, constituting Christian character, are fruits of His gracious operation, and are, therefore, properly represented as life from Christ, since they are the effects of faith in Him, which purifies the heart and "worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). Hence the Apostle utters those remarkable words—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20); see also Rom. vi. 9—11.

We imitate those whom we love. Paul exhorts Christians to imitate God Himself ("followers of God," Eph. v. 1). The effect of Divine grace is represented as appearing in the resemblance of its subject to the Saviour. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). The Spirit that dwelt in Him dwells in them. They experience a holy sympathy with the Redeemer, which influences them to live as He lives, for the advancement of the same objects. When they are exhorted to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. iii. 1), the purpose of the inspired writer is to urge them to copy Christ. He, living in heaven, is ever acting on behalf of His Church on earth; they, living on earth, are bidden to emulate the Lord's life, and, in like manner, to

be ever acting for the Church, so that their powers and opportunities may be constantly devoted to its interests. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17); that is, he is animated by the same motives and pursues the same ends. The Christian desires to be employed as his Heavenly Master is; in other words, to set one thing before him as the great object of life. That this was the endeavour of the Apostle will be confessed by all who have studied his life and writings. Christ lived in him; and he could say, in all sincerity, "for me to live is Christ" (Phil. i. 21).

The union between the Lord Jesus and the Church is frequently represented in the New Testament as similar to that existing between the head and the members (see Eph. iv. 15, 16; Col. ii. 19). The Spirit of Christ, bestowed on the Church, supplies, animates, preserves. The Lord lives *for* the Church; the Church lives *by* the Lord. The Lord and the Church constitute one glorious body, and there is a divine sympathy between the Head and the members, and between all the members respectively. On the one hand it is said, "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (Eph. v. 30); on the other, "Ye are members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). There is, so to speak, a mutual property. Each claims the other. Jesus says, "*My* Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). The Church replies, in

the person of Thomas, when restored to faith, "*My* Lord and *my* God" (John xx. 28). Even now, believers "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6). And they are provided for, through all time, and throughout eternity. "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 21—23). "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. viii. 17).

It may be said of every believer, that he is "in Christ." It is equally true that Christ is "in him." That heavenly life is maintained by faith. Believing and loving, the Christian eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Saviour, and thus the spiritual strength is sustained, Christ communicating Himself to His people. It is going on continually. "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). The fountain is always flowing, and it will never cease to flow. The happiness of the Church is secured. Her life is bound up in the life of her Lord, and *He* says, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). Even death will not separate them; for "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoso-

ever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26). When the believer dies, he goes to be "with Christ;" and at the last day Jesus will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21). Then the union will be completed. Christ will "present the Church unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27); and at the "marriage supper of the Lamb" there will be "joy unspeakable and full of glory." The guests will live for ever, and the feast will be everlasting.

These habits and these hopes were beautifully exemplified in Paul. He studied Christ intensely, and the effect was love and likeness. The likeness may be traced in a variety of respects.

Contemplating the Saviour's character as a man of God, apart from the consideration of His divine glory and the work of redemption, we cannot but note the deep emphasis of His piety. It was one unvaried flow of devotion. It was a perpetual stream of love. "I do always the things that please Him;" "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work;" "Father, glorify Thy name" (John viii. 29; iv. 34; xii. 28). The language of the prophetic psalm was fully verified—"I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psalm xl. 8).

Was not Paul animated by the same spirit? What else was meant when he exclaimed, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God. . . . The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 13, 14)? When he described the experience of Christians generally (Rom. xiv. 7—9), he described his own. And then, again, with what profound humility and holy fervour does he speak of his attainments and desires! "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12—14).

"Learn of me," said the Saviour, "for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. xi. 29). Gentleness was eminently characteristic of the Lord. And there was a tender considerateness in His demeanour which could not fail to move the hearts of men. When the paralytic was placed on his bed before Him, He addressed Himself first to the most pressing want, and comforted the poor man's soul before He healed his body (Matt. ix. 1—7). As the funeral procession passed by Him, when "there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and

she was a widow;" the Lord knew the anguish of that mother's heart, and proceeded at once to assuage it by words of power and soothing kindness, which prepared her to receive with calm joy her son, so wonderfully restored to her (Luke vii. 11—15). Paul had meditated on these things. He had observed the fulfilment of the prophecy, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isa. xlii. 3). "I beseech you," he said, "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 1). Such "meekness and gentleness" he also displayed, amidst unfeeling neglects and gross provocations. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you;" "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. ii. 4; xii. 15).

A good man, who died threescore years ago, observed:—"There is a true apostolicism in the character of St. Paul. It is a combination of zeal and love.

"The zeal of some men is of a haughty, unbending, ferocious character. They have the letter of truth, but they moun the pulpit like prize-fighters. It is with them a perpetual scold. This spirit is a reproach to the Gospel. It is not the spirit of

Jesus Christ. He seems to have laboured to win men.

"But there is an opposite extreme. The love of some men is all milk and mildness. There is so much delicacy, and so much fastidiousness! They touch with such tenderness! and, if the patient shrinks, they will touch no more! The times are too flagrant for such a disposition. The Gospel is sometimes preached in this way, till all the people agree with the preacher. He gives no offence, and he does no good!

"But St. Paul united and blended love and zeal. He MUST win souls: but he will labour to do this by all possible, lawful contrivances. *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* Zeal, alone, may degenerate into ferociousness and brutality; and love, alone, into fastidiousness and delicacy: but the Apostle combined both qualities, and, more perfectly than other men, realised the union of the *fortiter in re* with the *suaviter in modo.*"*

Akin to this was the impassioned earnestness and agonising desire manifested by the Saviour, when He beheld Jerusalem, and "wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 41, 42).

* Cecil's Works, iii. 515. Edition 1816.

Here also we find a counterpart in Paul. Who would have thought that the hard-hearted persecutor could be so changed? Who would have looked for tears from the eyes of Saul of Tarsus? We may note again some passages that have been already referred to, and admire the grace of God. (See Rom. ix. 1; x. 1; Phil. iii. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 29.)

Jesus might have enjoyed this world's comforts. He might have been surrounded by kind friends, and might have prosecuted His God-like mission without difficulty or exposure to ill-treatment. But He "took upon Him the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7), and "became poor" (2 Cor. viii. 9), in the most literal sense. He had no house to live in, and depended on charity. The self-denial which He enjoined on His followers He practised in His own person. Notwithstanding a life of unvaried and marvellous benevolence, and of spotless purity, he was slandered, mocked, derided, and at last put to death—the slave's death—the "death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). Paul, too, had learned, thoroughly learned, the lesson of self-denial. He worked with his own hands, and earned his daily bread; lest any should think that he was influenced by selfish or sordid principles. He endured hardships of the severest kind, of which we have an affecting catalogue, as before noticed, in 2 Cor. xi. 25—27. To this must be added the shipwreck, so

graphically described by Luke in Acts xxvii. And he died by the hand of the executioner.

Our Lord unsparingly exposed the hollowness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and insisted on the spiritual nature of real religion, in opposition to the formality which everywhere prevailed in his time (Matt. xxiii. 2—33 ; Luke xvii. 20, 21 ; John iv. 23, 24). Paul followed his Lord's example. He regarded religion as a transaction between God and the soul of man, and warned the people against delusions and makeshifts. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. iv. 20). "That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. iv. 14).

One day, when the multitude thronged around Jesus, and the press was so great that "they could not so much as eat bread," some of his friends and kindred took umbrage at it, and actually concerted measures for his apprehension as a lunatic. They approached the house where He was engaged in giving instruction, but the crowd about the door prevented their entrance. A message was sent—"Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee." How Christ-like was the answer! "He

looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother" (Mark iii. 20, 21, 31—35). This is the true spirit of Christianity—the love of God, and the love of goodness, wherever exhibited. It is not the family—the clan—the nation. There is nothing earthly in this fellowship. It is the union of hearts steeped in divine love, and regardless of worldly considerations. The Apostle entered into this feeling with his whole soul. The once frigid, haughty Pharisee, yielded to the blessed influence. (See 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 28, vi. 16; Eph. vi. 24; Col. iii. 11.)

Once more. This great man resembled the Saviour in his prayerfulness. We learn from the Evangelists that Jesus "dwelt in the secret place of the Most High" (Psalm xci. 1). He lived in the constant habit of communion with His Heavenly Father. His nights were sometimes spent in that communion. He sought refreshment and strength in prayer. It was not merely at the close of His mission, but throughout its exercises, that He could say, "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John xvi. 32).

The Apostle of the Gentiles was a close imitator of his Lord—he felt the power and preciousness of prayer. It was his refuge in danger, his solace in

sorrow, the habitual expression of his sympathy and brotherly love. With what earnestness did he pour out his desires for the spiritual progress of his children in the faith, and for the welfare of the Churches, "praying always" for them! Surely, he must have spent much of his time before the mercy-seat, so numerous are the references in his writings to his devotional remembrance of his brethren. And as, when they were nailing Him to the Cross, the Saviour said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34), so Paul, when he tells us that "at his first answer no man stood with him, but all men forsook him," adds, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge"* (2 Tim. iv. 16). He had "beheld the glory of the Lord," and was "changed into the same image" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

There was more than this. As it pleased the Lord that one of the twelve should be known as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John xiii. 23), so it seems that there was a special union between Christ and the new Apostle. Jesus had said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts ix. 16). Pauline suffering would need peculiar care and comfort. He should have it. The whole history illustrates the Lord's plan.

* More correctly, "May it not be laid to their charge."—*Alford.*

We have seen how the young convert was prepared for his extraordinary career; that he was sent into the wilds of Arabia, and placed under Christ's own training, so that Paul was indebted to no man for his theological culture, the Great Master Himself having undertaken the task.

When he returned to Jerusalem he was soon involved in peril for which he was wholly unprepared. The very sight of him was hateful to his former companions in violence. To hear him "preach the faith which once he destroyed" must have been maddening. They plotted against his life. The brethren did not discover the plot. But the Lord revealed it to His servant in the hour of prayer (Acts xxii. 18). Prompt measures were resorted to accordingly, and "the prey was taken from the mighty."

He bore the Gospel to that hotbed of frivolity and debauchery—Corinth. The devil raged at him, and mustered his forces in strengt' The missionary was threatened with violence. Even Paul's brave heart was near to quailing. The Saviour saw the danger, and interposed for his help. There was to be a large ingathering of souls at Corinth, and Satan's efforts to prevent it must be defeated. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set

on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts xviii. 9, 10). Thus far ran the supernatural. The object was accomplished. As, at Jerusalem, the divine warning prepared the way, and human prudence and promptitude did the rest; so at Corinth, when the heavenly vision had reassured the failing heart of the Lord's messenger, he engaged in his work with redoubled vigour, and "continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts xviii. 11). God's interference on behalf of His people is always well and wisely timed. It is not intended to supersede their own efforts, but rather to guide, stimulate, and encourage them.

Statistics and chronology often fail us in connection with the sacred history. Sometimes, when we seem to be nearer exactitude than usual, we are as much at fault as ever. But it is not worth while to vex ourselves about it. A little variation, one way or the other, will be of no consequence. We are thinking just now of a remarkable event in Paul's life. "I knew a man in Christ," he says, "about fourteen years ago." This is precisely put. It was "about fourteen years ago." But the word "about" may carry us a year back or a year forward; and we ought to be quite certain of the date of the letter in which the account is given, which can only be

approximately fixed.* After all, what does it matter? There is no doubt about the event itself; the exact time is of little moment. The event is another of those opportunities which are presented to us in the life of Paul, showing the tender care of the Lord. He was affected by something which he calls "a thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. xii. 7.). What it was is not stated, and the omission has grievously perplexed the commentators. It appears to have been a bodily ailment of some kind. A conjecture which has been hazarded by some, that it was a chronic affection of the eyes, which impaired his vision (the effect of the shock which he received on the road to Damascus), is as consistent with probability and with the known facts of the case as any other. It seems to be adverted to in Gal. iv. 14, 15. The expression, "ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me," is easily explicable on the supposition that has now been mentioned. It is confirmed by another circumstance, recorded by Luke (Acts xxiii. 1—4). The word translated "earnestly beholding" (ἀτενίσας, *fixing his eyes — Alford*) imports the effort of a man who *strains his eyes* in order

* The word "above," instead of "about," occurs in the original edition of the Authorised Version, published in 1611, and also in the earlier translations of Tyndale and Cranmer. It is the proper translation of the Greek text—ἄνω. Some critics treat it as an expletive, and omit it altogether. In Lange's Commentary we find the note, "omit '*above*.'" Beausobre and L'Enfant translate the clause—"il y a quatorze ans."

to see clearly an object at a distance. Paul stood at the lower end of a spacious hall, where, on account of his weak eyesight, he could not fully discern the countenances of those who were opposite to him. This prevented him from recognising Ananias, and accounts for his saying, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest" (Acts xxiii. 5).

It is natural to suppose that this imperfection of sight was a real trouble to the Apostle. It occasioned mistakes, and sometimes exposed him to ridicule. He feared it would lessen his influence among the people. He asked the Lord Jesus that "it might depart from him." No answer came. He asked again. Still no answer. Nothing daunted, he repeated his request; for he remembered that the Lord had said that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). It was not the Saviour's will that the affliction should be removed, but that its continuance should be the occasion of special interference for His servant's relief and help, and, therefore, of marked manifestation of His own faithful care. "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). How did it soothe his perturbed spirit! Christ would be more glorified by the continuance of the thorn than by its extraction. That satisfied the saint. "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ

may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

Several years after, when the Apostle was in the custody of the Roman soldiers in the castle Antonia, and it appeared doubtful whether they would be able to protect him from the violence of the Jerusalem mob, the sympathy of the Saviour was again displayed. "The Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts xxiii. 11). How did these words console him? How was he supported by them on his night-journey to Cæsarea—during his two years' imprisonment there—when he was tossed about on the Mediterranean in the fourteen days' storm, and the vessel was expected every moment to founder—and while sojourning for three months among the "barbarous people" (Acts xxviii. 2) of Melita? Death stared him in the face repeatedly (see Acts xxvii. 20). But he was quite safe; Jesus had said that he should "bear witness at Rome," and Jesus would keep His word. He did: Paul bore witness at Rome.

One more scene remains. Near the close of his second imprisonment, he was summoned to appear at Nero's tribunal. Whether it was the Emperor himself or the Prætorian Prefect who occupied the

seat of justice on that occasion, we are not informed; but it was a "lion-like" man, whose character was so well known that the Christians dared not encounter him. He was of the Jeffreys stamp. When it was found that he would preside at the hearing, no one ventured to accompany the venerable prisoner to the hall. "Paul the Aged" stood there alone and unbefriended. "No man stood with me." But there was One by whom he was not forgotten—One who had said, "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake . . . . but when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" (Matt. x. 18, 19). He was there, and His promise was fulfilled. The prisoner "opened his mouth boldly" (Eph. vi. 19), and faithfully preached the Gospel before the Roman officials, and the heathen multitude who crowded the hall. "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. iv. 17). He adds: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." That, too, was shortly after accomplished. When the sad procession wended its way to the place of execution, amid weeping brethren and raging foes, He who "hath the keys

of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18) was by the side of His servant, administering strength and consolation. The warfare was ended. He had "finished his course." He had "kept the faith." The "crown of righteousness" was just in sight. When the Roman sword did its office, the door of heaven was opened, and the angel-guards attended the ransomed one to his eternal home, where he heard the words of welcome, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21).

The loving care on the Lord's part was met by loving trust on the part of Paul. If the Saviour was always watchful over his servant, the servant was continually mindful of his Lord. Did he ever pass an hour without thinking of Christ? Did he ever begin or close a letter without mentioning His name or expressing in some way their endeared connection? He, Paul, who wrote the epistle, was "a servant of Jesus Christ," and he invoked on his correspondents "grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." The best wish he could utter for them, when about to sign his name to the letter, was that "the grace of the Lord Jesus might be with their spirits;" and in all his communications some reference to Christ was found interwoven with statements of truth, exhortations to duty, or descriptions of character — in

fact, with everything that fell under notice. His intention to take a journey was prefaced by the Christian phrase, "if the Lord will" (1 Cor. iv. 19). He could not remind Christian husbands and wives of their obligations without showing them that the marriage union symbolised the union between Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 22—32). The very slaves were told to discharge their duties "as to the Lord" (Eph. vi. 6—8); and to Christians of every class he said, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17). In the most literal and emphatic sense of the words, Christ was to him "all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

At his conversion, "the grace of the Lord was exceeding abundant" (1 Tim. i. 14). All through his life Christ's love was signally displayed towards him. Devoted love to Christ was manifested in return. If any man loved his master, Paul loved *Him*. But in what fearful style did he speak of those who refused to love his Lord! "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Cor. xvi. 22). To give more effect to it, he wrote this malediction, if we may so call it, "with his own hand," and then, immediately after, as if unwilling that his letter should close in the language of thunder and storm, he added, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus" (vv. 23, 24).

CHAPTER VII.

THE LETTERS.

Portability of the Bible—Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians—Corinthians — Galatians — Romans—Philemon—Colossians—Ephesians—Philippians—Timothy—Titus — Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It seems to have been the purpose of God that Christianity should be *portable*. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit should "teach" the apostles "all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them" (John xiv. 26). Yet how small a portion of His sayings has been recorded! And, of His wondrous deeds of love, how few are distinctly and separately narrated! They are told in the mass. (See Matt. iv. 23, 24.) The individual instances that appear in the narrative are set before us in all the beauteous simplicity of truth, and we long for more lengthened details. But the history would have been too cumbrous. The book must be the *world's book*,

which everybody may possess and read. It was, therefore, wisely ordered that it should contain such a selection of narratives and discourses as would comprise all that was necessary to be known on earth, and would not be burdensome by its prolixity and abundance of weighty matter. (See John xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25.) We may, therefore, suppose that the pens of the sacred writers were held in check. They knew a great deal more than they were permitted to tell. It was not of their own will that they were so chary of their information. They would have given the reins to diffusiveness, and written volume after volume, as the schoolmen did in the Middle Ages, who wrote huge books that no one reads. But they were prevented. The Church must have a handy, usable volume. And what if there are many blanks and omissions? Shall we not, if we are God's servants, see the prophets and apostles in Heaven, and learn from their own lips the story of their services and their sufferings? Is it not said that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. vii. 17)? And does not that include knowledge—the foundation of love, and joy, and holiness?

We have thirteen of Paul's letters in the New Testament—fourteen, if the Epistle to the Hebrews be included, about which there has been much

dispute. But we cannot believe that these fourteen letters (if there were fourteen) were all the public letters that Paul wrote during the thirty years of his ministry. He had "the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28), and that must have involved an extensive correspondence. The letters to the Church at Thessalonica are considered the earliest written of any of those which have been preserved. It evidently appears from these letters that he was accustomed to correspond with the Churches, and that so frequently that his style of writing was known, and some unprincipled persons had forged letters in his name (2 Thess. ii. 2). To prevent the success of such impositions he gave them a "token." His letters were written by an amanuensis. But the "salutation" at the close of his letters was now to be written "with his own hand" (2 Thess. iii. 17). It was a peculiar handwriting, and difficult to be imitated. "Ye see," he said to the Galatians, in writing to whom he had dispensed with the services of the amanuensis, "how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand;" or, as it was translated by the late Dean Alford, "See in how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand." Whether it was from his eyesight being defective, or from his being accustomed to write in Hebrew, the shape of the letters in which language differed greatly from the Greek, he had acquired the

habit of scrawling in large characters, perhaps not always well-shapen. Everyone could recognise a letter of Paul's, though everyone could not read it. These "large letters" were a sure "token." The forger could scarcely succeed in deceiving the Churches after this intimation.

"His letters," said the Corinthians, "are weighty and powerful" (2 Cor. x. 10). This indicates that they had already received letters from him; but only two of those letters have escaped the fate of such articles. In Col. iv. 16 there is probably a reference to a letter written by the Apostle, and then in the possession of the Church at Laodicea, which is now lost. We may infer also from 1 Cor. v. 9, that one of the lost letters is there alluded to. Peter, too (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16), intimates his knowledge of Paul as a letter-writer.

But let us be thankful for those that are left, and which contain "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. i. 3). They are a precious treasure, of priceless value.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written at Corinth in the year 52. It is rather didactic than doctrinal. It may be characterised as an effusion of fervent pastoral love, an outpouring of tenderness, for which we should have found it difficult to give credit to Saul of Tarsus. We should have thought that it was not in him—that he was a good hater,

and nothing more. But the severe and the soft not unfrequently meet in the same person. Pharisaism had chilled the gentle feeling in Paul. The Gospel warmed it into life, and gave it a development which nothing but the grace of God could produce. We cannot read this affectionate letter without admiration of the writer. The very egotism, as some would call it, possesses a charm which works upon our souls with indescribable power, and we rise from the perusal wondering at the change that had taken place in him, and emulous of the spirit by which he was moved.

We gather from the exhortations contained in this document that some of the professing Christians at Thessalonica found it hard to observe the personal purity required of believers, and that antinomian idleness had crept in among them. It was not surprising. The Gospel was as "marvellous" in its holiness as in its "light." The corrupting tendencies of heathenism had induced a laxity of morals which nothing short of divine influence could correct. That it was corrected, and that in places and under circumstances most unfavourable to such a result, abundantly justified the triumphant tone of address in another letter, when, having enumerated the vicious classes which thronged Pagan cities, the Apostle adds, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sancti-

fied, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11).

It is noticeable, too, that the exhortations, cautions, and precepts in this epistle relate entirely to the holy morals of Christianity, the peculiar sanctity which is the embodiment of Christian principles. There is not a word about forms and ceremonies and modes of service. Believers in those days understood that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was also written at Corinth, in the following year. Some expressions in the first had been misunderstood. The second coming of the Saviour was thought to be near at hand, and some disorderliness had arisen in consequence, tending to bring reproach on the cause. "If Christ may be expected any day"—so, it seems, they argued—"where is the need of care, and toil, and forethought? The avails of labour may never be realised. It will be wiser to obey, in the most literal manner, the Saviour's injunction to 'take no thought for the morrow.'" This apparently plausible, but mischievous, reasoning was sorely demoralising in its effects. The Apostle shows his brethren that they were under a great mistake, and that the Lord would not come till there had been a "falling away," which he predicts and

describes. It has taken place, and is still in operation, in various forms and disguises. Genuine New Testament Christianity is confined within narrower bounds than some are willing to admit.

Three years after, when the Apostle was at Ephesus, he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians. That Church was torn by dissensions. Violent party spirit prevailed, and was characterised by sinful folly and wilfulness. The names of Paul, Apollos, Peter, and even that of Christ Himself, were made the watchwords and war-cries of parties. Ambition and envy had been allowed to bear their bitter fruits, in connection with the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, which had been plenteously bestowed on the members of the Church. Gross departures from morality were suffered to pass unreproved. Heathen magistrates were called in to settle contentions among Christians. The supper of the Lord was turned into an uproarious feast. Unbelief had gone so far that some denied the resurrection of the dead, thereby striking a deadly blow at Christianity itself, which rested on the fact of the resurrection of the Lord. All these evils required to be dealt with firmly and prudently. Paul was equal to the occasion. He rebuked the delinquent Church with the authority of an Apostle. He commanded them to proceed at once to the exercise of discipline, and to cut off the offending member. He pleaded for

Gospel holiness. He inculcated meekness, love, and forbearance. The digression on "charity," in the thirteenth chapter, is the gem of the epistle. He taught them that Christianity is utilitarian, and that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (chap. xii. 7.) He exposed and rectified the abuses which had so unaccountably prevailed in their worship. He expounded at length the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, and the discussion was turned to practical account, in his wonted manner. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (chap. xv. 58).

A few months only had elapsed when Paul received more encouraging news from Corinth. His letter had proved effectual. The diseased limb had been cut off. Sorrow for their offence was ingeniously expressed by the Church; though there were still some among them who did not scruple to speak disparagingly of the Apostle, as of one who in power and authority was inferior to Peter and other members of the apostolic band. In his second Epistle, written, probably, at the same place (Ephesus), he maintains the honour of his apostleship, showing how, in labours, miracles, and sufferings, he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (chap. xi. 5), and setting forth the prin-

ciples which actuated him in his public career. It is a magnificent apology, distinguished by bursts of fervid eloquence, and by profound conceptions of truth, embodied in his own peculiarly terse style. In his plea for liberal contributions in aid of the poor saints at Jerusalem, and in his explanation of the mode of self-defence adopted, which largely consisted of statements of facts in his official life, there is a fine display of Christianised tact and clearness.

The Epistle to the Galatians was written about the same time, and exhibits the Apostle in quite another light. Tidings had reached him to the effect that Judaising teachers had entered the country, and were busily employed in persuading the people to submit to circumcision, and to observe the rites and ceremonies enjoined by the law of Moses. And they represented all this as necessary to salvation, thus completely nullifying, as far as in them lay, the Gospel of Christ. Paul's indignation was roused. He charged these intruders with perverting the Gospel (chap. i. 7). "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years," he said; "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (chap. iv. 10, 11). It was not, in his view, a mere difference of opinion on unimportant points, for it involved the abandonment of the essential truths of Christianity. The

Apostle used stronger language than is used in any other epistle. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (chap. i. 8). There is an abruptness of manner in some parts of the epistle which shows that he wrote in great perturbation of spirit. But the message to the Galatian Church was adapted for all time. The self-righteousness and dependence on outward services which it condemns have been upheld by unconverted men and worldly-minded ministers in every age. The readers of the Epistle to the Galatians will learn that pardon, and soul-freedom, and holiness are the gifts of the grace of God, through the atonement of the Lord Jesus, and, receiving the truth, will adopt the words of the writer—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (chap. vi. 14).

Luther's exposition of this epistle was one of the most valuable contributions to Protestant theological literature in the sixteenth century, and dealt heavy blows at the heresies of Papal divines.

Paul had not visited Rome when he wrote his letter to the Church in that city in the year 58. He alludes repeatedly to the fact, and to the longing desire to see the Christians there, which he had for

many years cherished. The statement made by many ecclesiastical historians, that the Apostles Paul and Peter jointly founded the Church at Rome, has not the shadow of a foundation. The founders of that Church are not known. We can only conjecture that some of the "strangers of Rome" (Acts ii. 10), who shared in the Pentecostal blessing, conveyed the Gospel to the imperial city on their return. The Church appears to have become quickly large and distinguished. Their "faith" was "spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. i. 8).

It was manifestly important that the Church of the metropolis should be well instructed in Christian faith and practice. The Epistle to the Romans is a body of divinity in miniature. The universal prevalence of depravity among men is stated and proved; the Jews, notwithstanding their peculiar distinctions and advantages, being included in the same condemnation as the Gentiles. The way of salvation, through the "propitiation" of Christ, and "faith in His blood," is clearly set forth. The privileges and blessings bestowed on all believers are described in animated and glowing language, and the sanctifying influences of the Gospel are insisted on as essential to the exhibition of Christian character. The servant of God is represented as delivered from "condemnation" (viii. 1), as "freed from sin" (vi. 7), as walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"

(viii. 4), as having "received the Spirit of adoption" (viii. 15), as "rejoicing in hope" (xii. 12), as being "called" according to the divine "purpose," and as so united to God in Christ "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (viii. 38, 39).

The rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, generally, gives occasion to the expression of deep grief on their account, and ardent anxiety for their salvation. While, in the sovereignty of God, they were then without the Christian fold, their conversion at some time future is prophesied. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved" (chap. xi. 25, 26): which can only mean, it is apprehended, that God's people, gathered from "Israel after the flesh," as well as from "the sinners of the Gentiles," will be ultimately blended into one body, dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem for ever.

The remainder of the Epistle, from the twelfth chapter, contains a code of Christian law, including individual believers and churches, with special reference to the manner in which weak and tender consciences should be treated. Those who live in

harmony with these instructions will be exemplars of pure and lovely Christianity.

As far as is known, Paul's pen lay idle for four years. That period includes his imprisonment at Cæsarea, his voyage to Rome, and the first year of his residence there. That he wrote no letters during those years is hardly to be imagined; for a man whose letters were "weighty and powerful" would not be likely to spend such a space of time in inactivity. But no public or official communications were transmitted to the Churches, or, if any were, they have not been preserved. It was mercifully ordered. Had all apostolic documents been kept on file, the Church would have been overloaded with volumes, which would have required a fortune to purchase and a life to read. When we look at the heaps of letters which crowd the pages of ecclesiastical history, and which only here and there a resolute antiquarian can venture to examine, we may be thankful for the restraining influence which rested on the ancients, both prophets and apostles, and prevented them from committing to publication the letters and literary fragments, which would have made our Bible too bulky a book for the use of ordinary Christian readers.

In the year 62 the Apostle sent a short letter to Philemon, a Christian gentleman of Colosse, whose slave, Onesimus, had absconded, and found his way

to Rome, where he fell in with Paul, by whose preaching he was converted. Under apostolic direction, he returned to his master, bearing with him the letter, which has been admired in all ages as a model of Christian courtesy and kindness, and a fine specimen of benevolent ingenuity.

The Epistle to the Church at Colosse is ascribed to the same year, and was probably conveyed to the city by Onesimus. There is a loftiness of thought in the letter which cannot fail to impress the reader. The Apostle seems to have been on some mount of transfiguration, where he had gazed, adoringly, on the glory of the Lord. In transferring his conceptions and feelings to paper, he labours for utterance. Every word is emphatic. His style—always terse—is here so terse as to border on the obscure. At the same time, it is distinguished by majesty and power peculiarly Pauline. He who reads this Epistle as if it were a common letter will suffer great loss. It should be "read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested."

There are references to the dreamy notions of some religionists who had already begun to trouble the Churches, and in confutation of whom Irenæus, Hippolytus, and others in subsequent centuries, wrote many hundreds of pages, which it is now a sore weariness to read. They were men who "intruded into those things which they had not seen, vainly

puffed up by their fleshly minds" (ii. 18). They sought to form an alliance between the mysticisms and profane darings of certain would-be philosophers and the pure sublimities of the Gospel, and only succeeded in bequeathing to the world theories at once unintelligible and useless. It would have been well if theologians had not sometimes borrowed from their vocabularies.

Personal and practical godliness, as depicted in this epistle, and enforced by solemn exhortations, must have shed a bright light on Colosse. A society composed of persons whose conduct exemplified the principles inculcated in the third and fourth chapters must have extorted general admiration. They were "men wondered at" (Zech. iii. 8).

In the Epistle, ascribed to the same period, and generally supposed to be written to the Church at Ephesus, though some think that it was a circular addressed to several churches, Paul repeated some expressions which he had used when addressing the Christians at Colosse. The Epistle itself is superbly grand. Going back to the old eternities, the Apostle contemplated God planning the salvation "before the foundation of the world" (i. 4), and providing a remedy for sin's sickness before the disease existed. The description of Christianity, in its ennobling, sanctifying efficacy and world-wide beneficence, is rendered the more interesting by the

use of splendid imagery, apparently suggested by the architecture of the temple of "the great goddess Diana," in the porticoes of which the writer had often walked, and perhaps "disputed daily" there, as well as in "the school of one Tyrannus" (Acts xix. 9). The practical portion of the Epistle is unusually full and minute in delineations of character and exhortations to the performance of duty, while it displays an accurate acquaintance with Grecian modes of life.

The Church at Philippi had sent a liberal contribution to the Apostle, which was not only acceptable in itself, in his "necessity," but especially so when he was undergoing the inconveniences and privations of prison life; for, though they were partially alleviated by the permission to hire and occupy a house, he was still a prisoner, being confined to that house, and condemned to the enforced companionship of a Roman soldier, who had in his hands the power of annoyance. Under such circumstances, the manifestation of sympathy and love by the Philippian Christians had a soothing, gladdening effect. His letter of acknowledgment, ascribed also to the year 62, glows with apostolic affection. It exhibits the warm breathings of the heart. There is less of the didactic than in the Epistles to Colosse and Ephesus. There is none of the stiffness of discussion. The Apostle pours out his soul to his brethren—admits

them to fellowship with his own inner life—and shows how the glorious truths which he published to the people furnished food to his spirit, and satisfied his hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. To the spiritually-minded Christian the Epistle to the Philippians must ever be a rich source of light and consolation.

The letters written at Rome, doubtless by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, present to us an illustration of a principle of the divine government. It is the principle of compensation. A seeming defect is often balanced by a peculiar excellence in some other respect. A loss is made up by a new blessing. So here. Restrained from his usual activities, deprived of the social enjoyments for which the Gospel makes provision, the Apostle was blessed with unwonted insight into "the deep things of God," and richer experience of the preciousness and power of the truth. Christ was very near to His servant. It was a confirmation of His own words of comfort, spoken years before—"My grace is sufficient for thee." And in blessing Paul, the Lord blessed all Christians who would read those letters, in every age and in every place.

Several years passed away before another public letter was issued. They were spent, according to ecclesiastic tradition, in apostolic labour. Possibly the journey to Spain, hinted at in Rom. xv. 24, was

undertaken, and Christianity planted in that country; but authentic memorials are wanting. This, however, is certain—that the Churches of Asia Minor and Greece were revisited. Subsequently, the Island of Crete received evangelising attention. Resuming his missionary work on the Asiatic Continent, the Apostle wintered at Nicopolis, in Epirus, where it is probable that he was apprehended, we know not on what charges, and conveyed to Rome, "suffering trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds" (2 Tim. ii. 9). His martyrdom soon followed.

The precise dates of the last three letters bearing the Apostle's name cannot be ascertained; but it seems evident that they were written in the last year or two of his life. The first Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus contain directions to those evangelists in the discharge of the important duties entrusted severally to them. They were called on to exercise a *quasi*-superintendence of churches in large districts of country, involving the responsibility of the appointment of pastors and other church officers. The choice of those officers, there is good reason to believe, rested with the people, though under advice; but their induction into office required the action of an Apostle or his substitute. When the Apostles died, the vacancies in the pastorate and other offices were filled up by the Churches in the ordinary way, according to the methods

of choice and appointment then in use among them.

These "pastoral epistles," as they are now called, are remarkable in another respect. They indicate the intrusion of disturbing elements into the Churches. Jewish visionaries troubled the people of God by "endless genealogies" and "old wives' fables" (1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 7). Sciolists in philosophy sought to attract attention by "oppositions of science" (1 Tim. vi. 20). The sober realities of the Christian faith were abandoned for mischievous novelties, conveying neither instruction nor comfort. True godliness was seemingly withering under the blasts of a moral simoom. But the Lord preserved His Church, and "the gates of hell did not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18).

One Epistle remains to be noticed—that to the Hebrews. It is difficult to believe it to be the composition of the Apostle Paul. His customary salutation is wanting. The name of the writer is studiously withheld. The style of the document differs remarkably from that of the letters acknowledged as the Apostle's. It is repeatedly quoted by the early fathers, but without any author's name. The authorship of the Epistle has been ascribed to Barnabas, to Luke, to Apollos. Certainty is unattainable. Perhaps the most probable theory is that which ascribes the composition of the letter to one of the

brethren who had been frequently in attendance on the Apostle, and who undertook to commit to writing the expositions which he had often heard from his lips.

Then the question of inspiration occurs. Here is an anonymous Epistle. What guarantee have we for its divine origin? Confessedly, we must rely, not indeed on the authority, but on the testimony of the early Church. The Gospels were anonymous—that is, no name of the writer appears on the face of either of them. Yet they were universally received as genuine and authentic books by those who lived at the time of their publication, and who were also satisfied, from internal evidence, that the authors were divinely inspired. The grounds of their belief may not be altogether patent to us in these days. But the case is this: the books have been handed down to us by the first Churches, with their attestation to the effect that, when they appeared, the proofs of their divine authorship were satisfactory, and they were placed on the list accordingly as divine productions, the works of "holy men of God," who wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). The Epistle to the Hebrews must be judged in the same way. At first there were doubts respecting it, chiefly on account of its anonymous character. Those doubts were removed, and the Epistle has since appeared in its proper

place among apostolic productions. The date assigned to its publication is the year 68, shortly after the death of the Apostle Paul.*

But, whatever hesitation may be felt with regard to the authorship of the Epistle, the divine excellence of its contents cannot be doubted. In matter and style, like the other books of the New Testament, it stands immeasurably above all merely human productions. It bears the stamp of divine authorship. It is an inspired commentary on the Book of Leviticus.

Contemplating the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles on the human side—that is, as literary productions, apart from their divine character — we cannot fail to be struck with the indications of great mental power. They are the works of a profound thinker. The writer was one of those who do not take opinions on trust. He thought for himself. Nor is that statement contradicted by his own declaration, that he received his knowledge of Christianity "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." That which the Lord gave him became his own,

* The fullest investigation of the authorship of this Epistle may be found in Dean Alford's "Prolegomena." His conclusion is that, though the Epistle was not written by Paul, "we yet conceive ourselves perfectly justified in accounting it a portion of the New Testament canon, and in regarding it with the same reverence as the rest of the Holy Scriptures" (Greek Testament, iv. p. 67).

emphatically, and, like knowledge of other kinds, underwent the ordinary mental processes, and was variously presented and illustrated, as his genius enabled him. We know very little of the nature of inspiration. The fact is certain; but it is equally certain that each writer has his peculiar style and mode of thought and expression, with which inspiration did not interfere, save to preserve from error. Hence the diversities of the inspired books. Isaiah greatly differs from Amos, and both from Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Peter could not write like Paul. John's style resembles neither.

Paul was more famous for logic than for rhetoric, though there are some fine touches of pure eloquence in his speeches and writings. His defence before Agrippa is a masterpiece. He is sometimes oppressed by weighty thoughts, which he scarcely knows how to express. He is, for the most part, clear and forcible, yet occasionally (as has been already observed) bordering on the obscure. There are some long parentheses in his writings, in which, when the thread of thought has been dropped, it is, now and then, difficult to find it and take it up again. But his admirers (and where are they not to be found in Christian lands?) are not repelled by these peculiarities, which are rather incentives to diligence. They are stimulated to laborious search. They ponder the meanings of

sentences and of words. Like the fortunate gold-diggers of Australia, they seldom work long without finding nuggets of inestimable value.*

* "I have often thought that St. Paul was raised up peculiarly to be an example to others, in labouring to discover the wisest way of exhibiting the Gospel: not only that he was to be a great pattern in other points, but designedly raised up for this very thing. How does he labour to make the truth REASONABLY PLAIN! How does he strain every nerve and ransack every corner of the heart to make it REASONABLY PALATABLE! We need not be instructed in his particular meaning when he says, *I became all things to all men, if by any means I might save some.* His history is a comment on the declaration."—*Cecil's Remains.*

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL'S THEOLOGY.

Scripture—God—Angels—Sin—The Salvation—The New Life—The Church—The Future State.

INCIDENTAL notices of the Apostle's views and teachings have been given in the preceding chapters. It is intended to present in this chapter a compendious statement of Pauline theology, as far as regards the principal topics of religious thought and inquiry.

I. SCRIPTURE.

The Old Testament was Paul's Bible. He received it as God's Word. He regarded it as God's own account of His dealings with men, and of the principles of His government. It was a true record and an instructive history. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4). But it was more. That volume contained "the Holy Scriptures," which were "given by inspiration of God," and were "profitable for

doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God might be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 15—17).

What was Paul's theory of inspiration, we do not know. There is not a word in his writings bearing on the subject. Whether he held with "superintendence," or "elevation," or "suggestion," or whether the verbal theory was preferred, we know not. All we can say is that he agreed with Peter, who affirmed that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). He believed that the minds of the writers were so directed and influenced that they wrote what was "profitable." In the passage just quoted from the Epistle to Timothy we have his tests of the Divine. He had been taught from childhood to reverence the Scriptures. He referred to them as authoritative, and commonly used the well-known formula, "it is written." See Acts xiii. 33, 35, 48; xvii. 2; xxviii. 23—27; Rom. iii. 10—18; iv. 3, 6; ix. 13—33; x. 15; xi. 2, 8, 26; xii. 19; xv. 9—12; 1 Cor. i. 31; ii. 9; iii. 19, 20; ix. 9; x. 1—11; 2 Cor. iv. 13; viii. 15; ix. 9; Gal. iii. 10; iv. 22—30.

But there was this singularity in the matter. Paul was making Scripture all the time. The "revelation of Jesus Christ" was a continuous blessing to him. He claimed to be constantly taught of the Lord. If

difficulties came in the way, whether relating to faith or duty, he depended on the "*light within*" in the highest sense of those words. "I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. vii. 40). His letters were written under that impulse, and he expected that his written messages, as well as his spoken discourses, would be received with the deference due to to an Apostle of the Saviour. It was "Christ speaking in him" (2 Cor. xiii. 3).

His letters constitute now a large portion of the didactic department of the new law. They are ranked by the Apostle Peter with "the other Scriptures" (2 Pet. iii. 16). How wonderful that the virulent persecutor should become one of God's writers, and that one of the most bigoted of the "straitest sect" should be everywhere known as the large-hearted Apostle of the Gentiles! "This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isaiah xxviii. 29).

It is noticeable that Paul never quotes from an apocryphal book. The allusion to "Jannes and Jambres," in 2 Tim. iii. 8, is to an unwritten Jewish tradition, which might have some foundation in truth. None but canonical books, as they are contained in our Protestant editions of the Bible, were regarded as authorities by the Apostle. This is the more remarkable, since there is reason to believe

that the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus were in high repute among the Jews of his time. But there is no reference to those books in his Epistles.

II. God.

The creation declares the Creator. His works proclaim "His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). That is the argument from design. Paul adopted it and felt its force. It is not obsolete yet.

God is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Tim. i. 17). His "judgments" are "unsearchable," and His "ways" are "past finding out" (Rom. xi. 33). He "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things"—"rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons" (Acts xvii. 25; xiv. 17). We are reminded of the "riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering" (Rom. ii. 4). Here is no trace of the abstract or the metaphysical. Paul was a matter-of-fact man; his theology is a collection of facts.

There is but one God. Judaism and Christianity are at one on that point. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things;" "God is one;" "One God and Father of all;" "One God, and one Mediator between God and men" (1 Cor. viii. 6; Gal. iii. 20; Eph. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5).

"God our Father" is a favourite expression with

the Apostle. It is found at the beginning of all his Epistles, in the formula, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Is it not a peculiarly Christian appellation, derived from the act of grace whereby all believers are constituted "the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26)?

Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because in Him were all things created: the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things have been created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things subsist" (Col. i. 15—17)—*Alford.* He was "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16), an affirmation which could be made of no human being, and which clearly points to a previous mode of existence. He, "being in the form of God, deemed not His equality with God a thing to grasp at, but emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 6, 7)—*Alford.** "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor" (2 Cor. viii. 9). He is even styled "God over all,

* "Esteemed not the being equal with God a prize to be seized on, but emptied himself."—*Ellicott.*

blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5); "the great God and our Saviour" (Tit. ii. 13).*

Surely the force of these statements cannot be evaded. If, on the one hand, the unity of God is maintained, as an incontrovertible truth of natural and revealed religion, it is, on the other, as clearly taught that the Lord Jesus Christ is equally with the Father the source of all blessing. Christians are described as those who "call upon His name" (1 Cor. i. 2). "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," the Apostle said to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 22), in his last letter, and at the close of it. It was his dying attestation to a peculiarly Christian truth, not often set forth in express terms, but implied in all his writings.

At the same time, let it be observed that the dry and hard technicalities of systematic theology are not derivable from Paul's religious style, nor can their use be justified by any utterances found in his discourses or letters. It was thought necessary, when the great councils met, in the fourth century, to fence the Church's faith by hard words, and to bind all its members to unity by enforced subscription to human creeds (which subscription was to be taken as proof that the subscribers believed them): but experience contradicts theory. There is most true faith where there is the greatest freedom.

* "Our great God and Saviour."—*Ellicott.*

Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the fountain of spiritual life. All Gospel blessings are the results of His influence on the soul. He teaches, regenerates, dwells in the renewed, sanctifies, seals "to the day of redemption." See Rom. viii. 8, 26; xv. 13; 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19; 2 Cor. i. 22; iii. 18; Gal. v. 5, 15—25; Eph. iii. 16; iv. 30; v. 9; 1 Thess. i. 5, 6; 2 Thess. ii. 13.

In the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14), now used in all Christian assemblies, we have the threefold manifestation of God (stated, but not explained, for Athanasius was not yet born), which came afterwards to be called the doctrine of the Trinity. How Paul would have expressed himself on this subject, if the impugners of the faith had appeared in his time, it is, perhaps, useless to inquire. It is certain, however, that he ascribed the same powers and blessings to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; but he avoided definitions and distinctions.

The words of Jeremy Taylor are much to the point: "He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention; talking of essences, and existences, and personalities, privity and co-equality, and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk something, he knows not what; but the renewed man, that feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom,

sanctification and redemption, in whose heart the love of the Spirit is shed abroad,—this man, though he understand nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the doctrine of the Trinity."

III. Angels.

The references to those heavenly beings are but few, and the knowledge derived from Paul's notices of them is not extensive. The passages in which those references are found are allusive rather than explanatory. They only serve to show that the Apostle regarded angels as superior beings, as he had learned from the Old Testament, while he deprecated paying them divine honour, which some, even at that early period, were disposed to do (Col. ii. 18). He recognised their ministration at the giving of the law, which was "ordained by angels" (Gal. iii. 19). He asserts that he himself at one time of his life received a consolatory message from an angel (Acts xxvii. 23, 24). In the phrase "elect angels," which occurs 1 Tim. v. 21 and nowhere else, there is probably a reference to the angels who "sinned," and "kept not their first estate" (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6), the "elect" ones being specially preserved by the grace and power of God. Our Lord calls them "the holy angels" (Matt. xxv. 31). In some mysterious way, not clearly explained, Christians will "judge angels" (1 Cor. vi. 3.)

Paul regarded Satan, the devil, as the great foe of God and holiness, who, in the inexplicable dispensations of the Almighty, had acquired such influence as to be fitly styled the "god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4). The "snares" of the devil, his "wiles," and "devices," are spoken of (2 Tim. ii. 26; Eph. vi. 11; 2 Cor. ii. 11). He is represented as always engaged in resisting the progress of true religion. The Apostle's "thorn in the flesh" is called a "messenger of Satan" (2 Cor. xii. 7). He would have visited the Church at Thessalonica on more than one occasion, but "Satan hindered" him (1 Thess. ii. 18). Elymas the sorcerer, who withstood him in Cyprus, was a "child of the devil" (Acts xiii. 10). The incestuous person at Corinth was to be "delivered unto Satan" (1 Cor. v. 5), as were "Hymenæus and Alexander," who had "made shipwreck concerning faith" (1 Tim. i. 20). This, probably, included some supernatural punishment, as well as excommunication.

The Apostle mentions only one being to whom the appellation "Satan" or "devil" is applied. The inferior spirits (referred to by our Lord in the phrase "the devil and his angels"—Matt. xxv. 41) are not called "devils," but "demons," as the word should have been rendered in 1 Cor. x. 20, 21; 1 Tim. iv. 1; and in all the narratives of "casting out devils." Of their nature, powers, history, &c.,

we are profoundly ignorant; nor does Paul enlighten us. He deals with facts, and does not suffer himself to be carried away by the "cunning craftiness" of speculations.

IV. Sin.

Paul taught the unity of the human race, and the superintending providence of God in all human affairs (Acts xvii. 26).

The original, first transgression is alluded to. Our parents were "deceived" (or, rather, the woman was "deceived," 1 Tim. ii. 14, and the man, as Milton says, was "fondly overcome by female charm"), and thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. v. 12). Fact again—terrible fact—yet nothing but fact—not a word about the mode of transmission. Pauline theology has no dreaminess in it. Something has been done—and such-and-such results have followed; and thus moral history is constructed.

Universal sinfulness is a prominent article in the Apostle's Creed. In the case of the Jews, who had received a divine revelation, the sinner was "a breaker of the law" (Rom. ii. 25). In the case of the Gentiles, sin was a rejection of the claims of God to exclusive worship, and turning a deaf ear to the remonstrances of conscience (Rom. ii. 15). The sinner "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. i. 25), and indulged in unholy lusts

and passions. None were free from the charge: "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). The picture drawn in Rom. i. 21—32 shows the hand of a master. It was taken from the life.

Sin deserves punishment. "The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. i. 18), and the effects of that wrath will be "tribulation and anguish" (Rom. ii. 9). Whatever partial experience of divine indignation may be suffered in this world, its full issues will appear in "the day of wrath" (Rom. ii. 5), when "God shall judge the secrets of men" (Rom. ii. 16).

God's judgment is just. The conscience of man discerns and decides on the right and the wrong, even without the help of revelation. But he did not obey conscience. He "did not like to retain God in his knowledge" (Rom. i. 28), and "walked in his own ways" (Acts xiv. 16). The corruption became so awful that God gave them up to "vile affections" and to a "reprobate mind," and the melancholy result was that all, Jews and Gentiles, had become "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3).

There were varieties and degrees of depravity, and, consequently, of guilt. Some plunged into all evil, without struggle or remorse; their consciences were "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 2).

Others, who discerned and acknowledged duty, offered feeble resistance, and alternately rose and fell, falling deeper and deeper at every turn. Their state is described in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It was the old story—

" . . . . video meliora
Proboque, deteriora sequor." *

There was no remedy. The Jew, who "made his boast of the law," and who was convicted as a transgressor, could not regain a sinless position, for by the law there was evermore "a knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). Outward acts of conformity were not sufficient: for "the law is spiritual" (Rom. vii. 14), claiming nothing less than the love of God "with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind" (Matt. xxii. 37). Such love was nowhere found; and when once it was wanting, the guilt which that want revealed could not be removed by any human device or effort. Such was the state of the Jews. The state of the Gentiles was equally hopeless. Paul taught everywhere that men should "repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts xvii. 30; xxvi. 20); but he never told them that by repentance and good works they might obtain pardon. No "works of righteousness" could save a soul. Man could not

* "I see and approve better things: I follow the worse."

effect his own deliverance. That could only be accomplished by divine mercy and divine power, if by any means those attributes could be exercised for the deliverance, so as not to conflict with the claims of justice.

V. The Salvation.

The key-note of the Apostle's theology is given in Rom. xi. 36—"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." It is God who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i. 11), foreseeing the ruin, providing for the recovery, laying deep the foundation of a mighty plan. It was conceived in the eternal ages, and was no afterthought. It preceded the existence of sin in the world. All the arrangements and provisions were included in it. The whole moral scenery was beheld at once by the Omniscient eye; for, as James said, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv. 18). The "purpose and grace" were "given in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9). He Himself was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8), and "eternal life" was "promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2). That the purpose or choice applied to individual cases, and was not merely a general measure, available under given circumstances, is clear from the current phraseology

of the apostolic letters. (See Rom. viii. 29, 30; Eph. i. 3—6; 2 Thess. ii. 13.)

While the nations generally were given up to idolatry and its accustomed vices, one family was withdrawn from the rest, and separated for higher purposes. The ulterior object was dimly indicated in the promise to Abraham, that in him and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. xii. 2; xxii. 18), which is intelligible to *us*, however obscure it might have been to the patriarch and his immediate descendants. More than two thousand years elapsed, during which the line of succession was preserved; and at length, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, and in her the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, "according to the flesh," made His appearance in Judæa. As man, He was perfect; as prophet, unequalled. But He was more than man, more than prophet. He was God's own Son, sent into the world for its salvation; and yet, while He was God's gift, He came voluntarily, and "laid down His life of Himself" (John. x. 18).

In the death of Christ, the Apostle saw the wondrous provision made by Divine mercy for the pardon of sin—the restoration of the soul of man, the implantation of holy principles, the formation of holy habits, and the preparation of the saved for an exalted state of bliss and purity. No words but his own can adequately convey his meaning. The sub-

stitution of modern phraseology for apostolic style ought not to be regarded as an improvement. The words of the first century are clearer and more emphatic than the words of the nineteenth. Commentaries and inferences not unfrequently becloud rather than enlighten.

A collection of texts, containing the Apostle's views of the redemption wrought by Christ, was given in the fourth chapter. We gather from those passages that the Son of God in human nature died in the place of sinners; that the effect of His death is such that, in pardoning those who believe, the righteousness of God is declared. He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus;" that Jesus is now "at the right hand of God," where He "maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 34); and that, in consequence of His work of redemption, "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9), actual and universal sovereignty being exercised by Him, in subordination to the interests of righteousness, which are the highest of all interests ("Head over all things to the Church"—Eph. i. 22). That redemption is the greatest and most wonderful transaction in the history of the universe—the greatest in itself, and the most wonderful in its results, embracing all happiness, all holiness, all duration.

VI. The New Life.

The redemption-work being accomplished, the next inquiry is, how it is to be carried into effect. The reply is, principally by the ordinance of preaching. The Sovereign of the universe having made provision for the pardon and restoration of men, on principles of strict equity, commands proclamation to be made "to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 26). The "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8) are to be freely and fully set forth. The preachers are required "by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2), to "warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom" (Col. i. 28), and to teach everywhere "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21).

From the beginning the effects were various. To some the "preaching of the Cross" was "foolishness (1 Cor. i. 18); to others, it was "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16).

Paul did not prescribe the amount of feeling which should precede peace of conscience in an awakened one, nor did he demand uniformity of experience. Neither was he satisfied with a bare admission of the truth of the Gospel. Many a Nicodemus would say, "We know that thou art a

teacher come from God;" to whom it would be necessary to reply, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 2, 3). When the Apostle said to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31), he expected more than an assent to the truth that Jesus could save him; he looked for personal acceptance of the salvation. In some cases the acceptance was prompt, and then the convert's peace flowed "as a river." In others there was demur, and difficulty, and doubt, and consequent delay, till the submission of the soul was complete. Then, when the sinner was satisfied with Christ, and became of the same mind toward Him as God Himself, the work was effected. He "passed from death unto life." He was "justified by faith." The condemnation was annulled. Christ, in whom he believed, had borne his sins, and he stood before God clothed in the Lord's righteousness (2 Cor. v. 21), for the propitiation was effectual "through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 25). Hence the work of the Saviour became, in a certain sense, the sinner's own. It was as if *he* had died. "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20). Christians are "quickened together with Christ" (Eph. ii. 5). They are "dead with Christ, and believe that they shall also live with Him" (Rom. vi. 8).

There was more than this. Not only was the

believer represented as being, in Christ, a participator in all the benefits and blessings of His death and resurrection; but Christ was represented as being *in* him. The divine life of the Saviour, so to speak, is reproduced in His people, and the purposes of His redemption-work are so far accomplished as they themselves become like their Lord. Christ lives in His Church. Life *from* Him produces life *like* Him, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. As the believer is "crucified with Christ," so, by another form of representation, the "old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). The flesh, in Him, suffered and died; and the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead dwells in the renewed man, who is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10). Good works are useless in regard to the acceptance of the soul before God; trusted in, they may sink it in perdition; but good works are necessary, as evidences of sincerity and fruits of union with the Saviour.

In Christian character and conduct every virtue is to be exemplified. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report" (Phil. iv. 8). Paul's morality was as comprehensive as his theology, and the Christian's obligations to duty were enforced by considerations of which

philosophy was altogether ignorant. He was "a member of Christ," and could not dishonour his Lord. Every form of evil was to be abandoned, and all fellowship with evil renounced (1 Thess. v. 22; Eph. v. 11). Nor were unholy actions only forbidden; Christian purity was inconsistent with "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," with "foolish talking," and "jesting" (2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. v. 4).

Communion with God in prayer and praise was enjoined by the Apostle as a constant practice. He was himself a bright exemplar. He taught Christians to "pray without ceasing," and "in everything to give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 17, 18; Phil. iv. 6, 7).

Brotherly love was declared to be the special duty and distinction of all believers, and whatever was contrary to it was indignantly condemned. The beautiful description of this virtue, or Christian grace, in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, can never be sufficiently admired. Perhaps it is not always remembered that the Apostle's own character was a living commentary on his description, and that the existence of such a character, in his case, was a remarkable manifestation of the mighty influence of the grace of the Lord Jesus, by which the transformation was effected. Surely, that was a wonderful change! The man who had raged like a wild beast against the Church became exemplary for tenderness of affection!

Nothing gave him so much pleasure as to witness or hear of practical displays of love to the brethren (2 Thess. i. 3; Philemon 7). But, however distinguished these manifestations were, his ardent soul was not satisfied: he desired that they might "abound more and more" (Phil. i. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 9, 10); and he laboured in his Epistles to impress on Christians the importance of union, forbearance, and a forgiving disposition. Christianity, in his view, was a religion of love, and all Christians were equal.

The possession of spiritual gifts was the distinction of the Church in those days. It was a distinction not unconnected with peril, exposing the possessor to the temptation of pride and boasting. Believers were warned against it. Paul instructed them that utility is the test of value; that "the manifestation of the Spirit" was given for useful purposes; and he assured them that, for his own part, he would "rather speak five words with his understanding, that by his voice he might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Cor. xii. 7; xiv. 19).

Christians in apostolic times shared the common sorrows and trials of life, and suffered, in addition, the indignities of persecution—the world's mode of conducting its controversy with the Church. None looked for exemption. "All that will live godly in

Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). How they were instructed to bear it—how manfully they endured—and with what joy they looked forward to the "blessed hope" and the "crown of glory," the record of the Apostle's personal experience testifies. "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;" "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Cor. iv. 9, 16—18; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). Hear, too, his triumphant appeal: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 35—39).

VII. The Church.

Paul's theology, it has been observed, was taught him by Christ Himself. It is, therefore, peculiarly

desirable to ascertain his views and practices relative to the management of Christian affairs in the Churches. The voice of the Lord should prevail over the deafening din of contention, and the strifes of sects.

The converts to Christianity under Paul's preaching were baptized, according to the Saviour's command; but the Apostle himself rarely administered the ordinance. He followed the example of Peter, who "commanded" the converts at Cæsarea "to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts x. 48; 1 Cor. i. 14—16; Gal. iii. 27); and it is evident that he regarded it as a very solemn transaction, involving serious obligations (Rom. vi. 3, 4).*

Those who, like the Corinthians, heard, believed, and were baptized, became, by that act, professors of Christianity, and were constituted as churches in the places in which they lived. We have no knowledge of any form or ceremony observed at the

* When a convert was baptized he separated himself from the world, and "put on Christ." He professed to be "dead unto sin" and "alive unto God." As in his baptism the death and resurrection of the Saviour were symbolically represented, he was henceforth expected to appear among men as a risen one, "risen with Christ." "The plunging into the water signifieth that we die, and are buried with Christ, as concerning the old life of sin, which is Adam. And the pulling out again signifieth that we rise again with Christ in a new life, full of the Holy Ghost, which shall teach us and guide us, and work the will of God in us, as thou seest in Rom. vi."—*William Tyndale.*

constitution of a church, or the admission of members. At first, as may be supposed, the methods were of the simplest kind. In process of time, it became necessary, or was deemed necessary, to adopt regulations as guides and safeguards; but what they were, if any existed in apostolic days, is not recorded.

The purposes for which churches were established were twofold: first, mutual help; secondly, the spread of Christianity. The first was sought to be accomplished by meetings at stated times for training in knowledge and piety, and by such practical exemplifications of brotherly love as the various conditions of the members, their wants or their sorrows, required. The second called into exercise the gifts of the members for the furtherance and defence of the Gospel, and led them to "adorn the doctrine," by the avoidance of vice, and by such acts of benevolence and holiness as could not but excite the wonder of heathen observers, and stimulate them to inquire into the claims of the system which produced those effects.

The religious services of the Churches were mostly celebrated on the first day of the week—the "Lord's Day." It was recognised by Paul as the Christians' holy day. He waited at Troas a week that he might meet his brethren at the usual time (Acts xx. 6, 7), and directed the Corinthians to "lay

by them in store" on that day, as they might have prospered, that they might be ready for the collection when it should be called for (1 Cor. xvi. 2). Those services seem to have been at first of a very miscellaneous character. At Corinth, where spiritual gifts abounded, "every one had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a tongue, had a revelation, had an interpretation" (1 Cor. xiv. 26). The greatest freedom prevailed, and it was found necessary to admonish them that all things should be done in a becoming manner. But there, as well as in all other places, the elders or bishops instructed, admonished, and in other ways endeavoured to edify the Churches. The order of the exercises is not known. In addition to the teachings, there were prayers and praises, and, probably, reading of the Scriptures. The celebration of the Lord's Supper was an integral part of the service; indeed, it seems to have been regarded as the chief object of their assembling (1 Cor. xi. 20). In this way they "shewed the Lord's death," and declared their union with one another (1 Cor. xi. 26; x. 17).

"Elders" have been mentioned. It was Paul's practice to "ordain elders" in every place where a Church was established. The qualifications of these officers are enumerated in 1 Tim. iii. 2—7, and Tit. i. 6—9. While such men presided over the Churches, safety and progress might be confidently expected.

Their temporal support was guaranteed (1 Cor. ix. 14; 1 Tim. v. 17).

The only other officers spoken of in Paul's writings are deacons and deaconesses. The former are noticed in Phil. i. 1, and 1 Tim. iii. 8—13; the latter in Rom. xvi. 1, and probably in 1 Tim. iii. 11.* The duties of the deacons are not defined. If their office originated in the appointment of the seven at Jerusalem (Acts vi. 1—6) to "serve tables," the secular was assigned to them, as the spiritual was to the elders or bishops.† To the deaconesses were naturally entrusted many cares not easily to be specified or enumerated, which the supervision of the female members of the Churches rendered necessary.

In order to carry into effect the purposes for which Churches were constituted, there must have been meetings and places of meeting. We know but little of either of them. The transaction of Church business gradually grew up into an orderly

* "Their wives."—*Authorised Version.*
"The women also."—*Alford.*
"The women in like manner."—*Ellicott.*
"*Mulieres.*"—*Vulgate.*
The Greek Fathers almost unanimously consider the reference to be to deaconesses.

† These two words were used to denote the same officers. The Jews called them "elders"; the Greeks "overseers," or "bishops" (Acts xx. 17, 28; Tit. i. 5, 7).

shape. But it does not appear that Paul was desirous of rigid formal observances, or of uniformity in all outward things. He wished everything to be done (1) "with charity," (2) "unto edifying," (3) "decently, and in order," (4) "in the name of the Lord Jesus," (5) "to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 20; xiv. 26, 40; xvi. 14; Col iii. 17). These were the five *primitive apostolic canons*. Nicæa did not improve upon them.

All Church duties were summed up in one expression—"brotherly love." Whatever was contrary to brotherly love was to be deprecated and avoided. It was to be manifested by relief of temporal necessities—by sympathy with the sorrowful—by tenderness to the weak—by forbearance and forgiveness. Even the discipline of the disorderly was one form of Christian love; for it aimed at the true welfare of those concerned, and therefore sought the general good. Exact rules were not given, except in regard to breaches of public morality, which were to be visited by prompt exclusion from the Church. In other cases, admonition or reproof would ordinarily be effectual. The management of affairs was left in the hands of each Church. There was no graduated scale of punishments. The laws of Christ would be enforced with Christian firmness, exercised under the influence of love, guarded by purity. If an offender repented,

he was to be restored to his place. Love and holiness ruled in everything.

All the Churches were independent of each other. No Church could dictate to any other Church, nor require that its modes of worship or government should be adopted. All were free from outside interference. Uniformity was not then born. It is true that the Apostle adverts to his "ways which were in Christ, as he taught everywhere in every Church" (1 Cor. iv. 17); and declares that "the care of all the Churches" lay upon him (2 Cor. xi. 28). But the authority which he assumed as an Apostle of the Saviour did not vexatiously intermeddle with Christian freedom. General principles were inculcated, which were to be applied by the Churches as circumstances required, in which application there might be much variety of method. Minor details were left to choice. "As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all Churches" (1 Cor. vii. 17). This was not an ordination of uniformity, but of freedom.

The adherents of priestcraft will get no encouragement from Paul. In his view, the Lord Jesus was sole Head of the Church, the source of power, the fountain of the gifts by which the Church was supplied and governed. Apostles, prophets, and evangelists were extraordinary officers; the elders,

bishops, "pastors and teachers" were Christ's servants, and, under Him, ministers to the Churches. There were no priests, properly so-called. The Christian priesthood was universal. Believers had "gifts differing according to the grace that was given to them" (Rom. xii. 6). In exercising those gifts they co-operated with the elders and helped them, "esteeming them very highly in love, for their work's sake" (1 Thess. v. 12, 13). The elders ruled, yet not without the suffrages of the members. Together they "warned the unruly, comforted the feeble-minded, supported the weak" (1 Thess. v. 14). The Churches were self-governed, yet they respected and observed the teachings of the elders, who expounded the laws of Christ. Love bound them in holy union. A Christian Church was neither a monarchy, an aristocracy, nor a republic; it combined the excellencies of all. Christ was the Head of the Church universal. The Apostles might be termed the Christian nobility. The members of individual Churches were free subjects. The laws were Christ's laws, communicated through the "twelve," and carried into effect by the whole body, in its several communities, each exercising independent power and authority, and all responsible to the King.

Men have busied themselves and perplexed one another by the invention of numberless complex,

and often contradictory canons and decrees. If a Christian Church wishes to prosper and grow, let the teaching of the Master and His Apostles be followed, and nothing else. Every case, however intricate and difficult, will be found to be provided for, either by express precept, by example, or by the primitive apostolic canons already mentioned.

VIII. The Future State.

The Christian's life was a journey to heaven. He was taught, from his conversion, to look forward to union with Christ in the next world as the consummation of bliss and purity. Under the teaching of Paul, he believed that, when he died, he should go to be with Christ, and that, at the resurrection, the Saviour would "change his vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. i. 23; iii. 21). Little was said respecting the intermediate state; it was enough to know that, when "absent from the body" he would be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), and, therefore, that "to die would be gain" (Phil. i. 21).

The second coming of Christ was, at first, daily looked for, and it seems probable that some were so influenced by the prospect as to neglect their earthly affairs, which were so soon, as they imagined, to be altogether abandoned. The Apostle found it neces-

sary to undeceive them by showing them that "the day of Christ," instead of being "at hand," would not come till an awful and lengthened apostasy had taken place (2 Thess. ii. 1—3). The apostasy has appeared, and the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. ii. 7) is still working; but the day of Christ is not yet "at hand."

The Apostle does not particularise circumstances, nor fix dates. We learn from his letters and discourses that at the last day the Lord Jesus will "descend from heaven;" that "the dead in Christ" will be first raised; that those who shall be then alive will undergo a change equivalent to death; that the united Churches, including the changed living and the raised dead, shall then ascend to "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 14—17); that there will be a resurrection of the "unjust" as well as of the "just" (Acts xxiv. 15); that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10); and that, after the solemn adjudication, God's servants will enter into "glory, honour, and peace" (Rom. ii. 10), while His enemies will endure the extremity of His righteous displeasure against sin. The Apostle's words are terribly plain—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. i. 7—9). The word "hell" is not found in his writings, but the punishment of the ungodly is adverted to in lan-

guage of tremendous power, although we know not where nor how it will be experienced.

He enters more into detail on one subject. We refer to the resurrection-body of the saints. Nothing is said of the raised body of the wicked. That it will be capable of enduring "tribulation and anguish" is plainly stated (Rom. ii. 9; see also our Lord's words, Matt. x. 28): *how* they can endure, we are not told. Nor are we much more clearly enlightened respecting the bodies of the saints, though many more particulars are mentioned. Here, again, as in all the salvation, Christ is the centre, the pattern. Everything is comprised in the declaration already quoted from Phil. iii. 21—"all things unto Himself"—body as well as soul. Of the nature and constitution of that new body, we know nothing. It will not be earthly flesh and blood. It will be a "spiritual body." It went down to the grave in "weakness"; it will be raised in "power." It was "corruptible"; it will be raised in "incorruption." It sunk into the earth helpless and dishonoured; it will rise up "in glory," quickened—ethereal—immortalised—ever fresh and young. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49). It is useless to speculate. Another Apostle expresses the same thought, but goes no farther: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

The Lord Himself included all in a sentence, when He said, "Neither can they die any more" (Luke xx. 36).

Then, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 54). "And so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). That will be the consummation of all wishes and hopes. There and then will be the best society—the best employment—the highest bliss—and all without change, without end.

All the family will be there; all who "love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8). "Joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17), they will enter into possession of the inheritance. Here, they "groaned within themselves" (Rom. viii. 23); there, the "manifestation of the sons of God will be seen in its full glory," and they will "know even as also they are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

The great rebellion is put down. God's authority is vindicated. A holy family, gathered from all nations, has assembled in the heavenly palace. In their happiness and purity Christ will be "glorified" and "admired" (2 Thess. i. 10). Yes! "glorified" and "admired": for it will be seen that His grace triumphed over every form of opposition, and subdued all enmities; that no foe finally prevailed against Him; but that He had "put down all rule,

and all authority and power" (1 Cor. xv. 24). The millennial glory has come and gone. The bright visions of prophecy have seen their accomplishment. The purpose for which the Son of God became incarnate has been amply realised. The incarnation has fulfilled its mission, and in its manifested and visible form is no more needed. The Son withdraws from the voluntary union with the human, which no longer requires to be sustained, now that the object has been entirely and for ever secured. He "delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. xv. 24). The glory of the Deity, which seemed to be obscured by the rebellion, is restored, and God is "All in All" (1 Cor. xv. 28). Quietness, peace, purity, and bliss unspeakable reign throughout the universe. The history of the conflict is reviewed with grateful emotions. The doubts and misgivings that were so often mingled with faith have ceased for ever. God's policy in the management of affairs during the rebellion, and in His modes of dealing with the rebels, is contemplated with unmingled admiration. If such a feeling as self-reproach can be indulged in heaven, it is in the recollection of the distrust and unbelief which were too often yielded to on earth. But now the scales have fallen from all eyes. On every hand the acclaim is heard—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33).

CHAPTER IX.

AN ARGUMENT.

Truth of the History—Paul was not Deceived—He was not a Deceiver—Originality of his Religious System—The History Intelligible, if Christianity is true—Certainty of its Truth.

THE conversion and history of the Apostle Paul furnish a powerful argument in favour of the Divine origin of Christianity.

There can be no question as to the truth of the history, which is admitted on all sides. It is a fact that Saul of Tarsus left Jerusalem, bearing a commission to arrest Christian Jews who might be found at Damascus. It is a fact that he was not merely in the employ of the Jewish authorities on that occasion, but that he was also a voluntary agent, carrying into effect their purposes with a willing mind. It is a fact that he failed in the execution of his intention. It is a fact that the reason assigned by himself for his failure was that Jesus Christ appeared to him on his journey in miraculous splendour, and commanded him to engage in His service. It is a fact that a

wonderful change instantly appeared in his character —a change which neither friends nor enemies could account for. It is a fact that his subsequent life exhibited an unvarying course of devotion to the Saviour, which exposed him to privations and sufferings of no common kind, issuing in his public execution as a malefactor.

Now, our first inquiry may be, was all this real? or was Paul the victim of some delusion—practised upon by a skilful master of trickery? Several considerations may be adduced in favour of a negative reply to the last question.

Paul was not a man of soft, impressionable temperament—likely to be wrought upon by an appeal to the imagination, or to be easily beguiled or overreached. He was distinguished by strong common sense. He would consider a subject understandingly, and know the reasons of things. Although liable to occasional excitements, springing from just and adequate causes, he was far from being governed by impulses; nor was he apt to be frightened into a course of action by seemingly strange phenomena. It was more likely that he would speculate on the wonderful, or frame theories respecting it, than allow himself to be alarmed by any mysterious manifestations or appearances. His habit was to require grounds for faith, to demand evidence, and to look for realities.

Such a man was not to be imposed upon. His was not a temperament that would invite the practisings of an impostor. If in his life there were witnessed any sudden changes of purpose or action, all who knew him would take for granted that reasonable ground for such changes existed, and could be adduced for the satisfaction of inquirers.

The nature of the effect or change must also be considered. If it were merely physical, it would in all probability cease to operate in a few days, or at most in a few weeks. In Paul's case, the effect was twofold—partly physical, partly mental, or, to speak more correctly, moral. The physical, his blindness, was the natural effect of "the glory of that light" (Acts xxii. 11), and would have shortly subsided had it not pleased God to remove it by the intervention of his servant Ananias. But what explanation can be given of the mental or moral phenomena? How shall we account for the altered feeling—the submissive tone—the protracted prayer? When he was smitten to the ground, he was within sight of Damascus, and was going there "to bind all that called on the name" of the Lord; and now he himself is heard engaged in the invocation. The bodily pain, if any were endured, was nothing in comparison of the tumult of the soul. There was evidently a strange revolution of thought—a mighty revulsion—the effect of an all-powerful influence. And it had a permanent

issue. The hand of Ananias removed the blindness, but his words confirmed and deepened the inward impression. That was not temporary. It resulted in permanent habit, which, as years rolled on, grew stronger and stronger, in spite of all the efforts of men and demons to destroy it. There was a marvellous consciousness, tinging deeply and lastingly his whole character, and shaping all the future of his life. Is it reasonable to ascribe such remarkable effects to an illusion? Paul believed that he had actually seen the Lord Jesus. More than twenty years afterwards we hear him asking, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1.) He traced his religious experience to that event. The Lord's look penetrated him. The Lord's words always rung in his ears. Strong conviction fastened on his soul. All his subsequent history tended to prove the genuineness of that conviction, and the certainty of the event itself.

And if it be admitted that Paul was not deceived, it is surely equally clear that he was not a deceiver. He had no intention to change sides. Nothing could be farther from his mind on the morning of that memorable day. What inducement was there? He was on the road to worldly honour and distinction, and would sacrifice his temporal interests and bring a dark blight on his prosperity if he stopped in his career. All earthly considerations

united in persuading him to continue in the course he had marked out for himself. To suppose that he suddenly abandoned his purpose and joined the hated sect, without promise or prospect of advantage, and that, to justify himself, he invented the story of Christ's appearance *to* him, is to charge him with folly and dishonesty, accusations which nothing in his life can warrant. For, we ask again, what were the inducements? What could he gain by it? Ambition could not be pleaded; for, if he might hope to obtain a prominent place among the leaders of Christianity, which was hardly probable as long as the original Apostles lived, there would be small honour in standing at the head of a despised society, which all the world had united to crush. As little room was there for the imputation of avarice. No one could expect to get rich, at any rate, in Jerusalem, by becoming a Christian; for Peter had not a penny to give a beggar (Acts iii. 6). "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts iv. 34, 35); and in the next generation, "the poor saints" of that city were thankful for help from abroad (Rom. xv. 25—27). Paul's own experience shows that, if he had ever entertained the expectation of deriving material

benefit from the adoption of the profession of Christianity, he was miserably disappointed. He had to work for his living, and not unfrequently he was in a state of absolute destitution, having "no certain dwelling-place," "in hunger and thirst," "in cold and nakedness" (1 Cor. iv. 11—13; 2 Cor. xi. 27).

The religious system taught by the Apostle, and exhibited in his writings, furnishes a powerful corroboration of the argument now before us. A brief sketch of that system has been given. Let it be carefully and impartially examined. Does it not reveal a complete antagonism to the Judaism of that age? We may safely assert that no religious Jew, being still a member of the synagogue, could have written those letters. The sentiments they express, the feelings described, the hopes indulged, are those with which Jews could have no sympathy. Not to mention other points, the largeness of heart exhibited towards the Gentiles, and the satisfaction with which their equality with the Jews in the Church of God was contemplated, was altogether peculiar. In nothing was the narrow-mindedness of the Jewish people of those times more strikingly displayed than in their determination to withhold the blessings of the new covenant from the Gentiles. They would not touch nor eat with them on earth; they wished to keep them out of heaven, that they might not be compelled to admit them to the

holy brotherhood there. In direct opposition to all this was the Christianity of Paul. Whence was it derived? How came it to pass that the man who had "made havoc of the Church" was changed into a tender-hearted and liberal messenger of divine benevolence? It was a moral revolution. In what way was it brought about?

There is but one answer to these questions: "This also cometh of the Lord of Hosts." And the same explanation must be given of the entire religious system taught and advocated by the Apostle. He did not invent it; he could not invent it. He did not learn it of Gamaliel, who was equally incapable of inventing it. No Jewish book contained his doctrines. They were so spiritual, so sublime, as to be out of the reach of the Jewish mind of that century. Surely, we are shut up to the Apostle's own conclusion: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Gal. i. 11). Of the manner in which the revelation was made to him we have no knowledge. But the fact is clearly stated. Paul is a trustworthy witness. He writes as a man who ought to be believed, and his whole life is a guarantee for his sincerity and truth. The Pauline theology is of God, and, being so, Christianity is divine.

Admit this, and everything is accounted for. If Christianity is true, Paul's history is intelligible.

Wonderful as it is, in all respects, it harmonises with the wonderful system with which it is associated. We can understand the phenomena of the Apostle's life, which is seen to be the natural development of Christian principles. We feel no surprise at the disinterestedness, the self-denial, the patient endurance of manifold suffering, the willing surrender of social comforts and ambitious hopes, the companionship of the despised and persecuted followers of the Nazarene, the enthusiastic attachment to the "Man of Sorrows," for whom he had "suffered the loss of all things" (Phil. iii. 8). This, and much more not necessary to be detailed, was the natural fruit, springing from the heavenly seed which was sown in Paul's heart when Christ met him in the neighbourhood of Damascus. We see in him the regeneration, the new life, the devoted love, the burning zeal, the contempt of pain and shame, the calmness in the prospect of death, the joyful outlook on the heavenly land, which Christianity, and Christianity only, produces. Christ's Gospel is the text, and the history of Paul is the commentary. The text deserved the commentary—the commentary is worthy of the text. They are fitted to each other.

But take the contrary view. Say that Christianity is not true—that the Gospel history is a legend or a myth—and that the system which claims to be

divine is a tissue of fraud, or an outburst of fanaticism. Then, how are we to account for the conduct of the man of Tarsus? He was no simpleton, no ignorant clown or barbarous Bedouin, who might easily become the victim of plausible superstition. He was one of the best educated men of his age and nation. There was no tendency to the credulous in him. An impostor would not have deemed him a likely subject for his operations, but would rather have been repelled by his stern and stately bearing. Besides, he was placed in circumstances eminently favourable to the detection of the supposed imposture. He had been living for years in Jerusalem, and was personally cognisant of all that had taken place in that city during his residence there. Nor was he an unobservant spectator. He was a warm partisan, deeply concerned for the perpetuity of the national system, and opposed to any innovation, "being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers" (Gal. i. 14). On the first appearance of the Christian missionaries he seems to have contented himself with quiet observation. At any rate, he took no active steps till the persecution and murder of Stephen roused the wrath within him. He then became an accomplice in that violence, and did all he could to perpetuate the cruel policy. Not because he looked on Christ and

his Apostles as impostors, whose pretensions he was bound to expose. There is no hint of that. But it was because he foresaw that, if Christianity prevailed, Judaism must fall; and Judaism, he was assured, was of God. True, it was corrupted and overlaid by the "traditions of the elders," which had, in fact, superseded Moses. But that had escaped his notice, nor had he so carefully studied the prophets as to sympathise with the expectations of the submission of the Gentiles to God which their predictions warranted. One kind of submission only was thought of by the Jews—the subjugation of all nations to Israel by the sword. Union and incorporation were abhorrent to them. Paul suspected that, if the new doctrine prevailed, Moses would be thrust aside, and Christ exalted. But Moses' law was destined, as he believed, to perpetuity, and the Jews were to be universal conquerors. Hence his hatred and malice. He regarded the Christians as enemies to the country, and therefore to be uprooted and destroyed. The facts could not be denied: the miracles were patent to all men. There was but one course to be adopted. It was relentless hostility, aiming at nothing less than extermination without mercy. Christianity was treated as a rival system, doomed to destruction; for two systems, each claiming to be

divine, could not exist together. One or the other must die.

Such was Paul's view of the case. He abandoned it, and joined the hated sect. He devoted all the energies of his energetic soul to the advancement of the sect, and became Christianity's champion, sacrificing all his earthly hopes, and exposing himself to losses, perils, and pains, terminating at last in the public death of a criminal. Now, if he knew that Christianity was an imposture, this conduct was unaccountable; and the more so, because he not only lost all, in a worldly point of view, but did not gain the pre-eminence and power which an ambitious demagogue would have accounted a sufficient reward. The heathen looked on him as an incorrigible fanatic, and drove him from city to city. The Jews detested him as an apostate. By many, even among the Christians, he was disliked, and they sought to blacken his character and diminish his influence. The "perils among false brethren" (2 Cor. xi. 26) affected him, it cannot be doubted, much more painfully than all other forms of suffering. In short, on the supposition that Christianity was a mere human invention, Paul's history is inexplicable. He must have known it, and, knowing it, would have dissolved his connection in disgust. Admitting that he had become a Christian in the hope of making use of the new system as a means of his own

aggrandisement, the complete disappointment of that hope would have induced him to leave the party. But he persevered, notwithstanding all. That perseverance proved his sincerity. It did more; it proved that Christianity was what it professed to be; for, if not, such a man as Paul, whose opportunities for inquiry were so complete, would not have been deceived. It is contrary to all human experience that such a history as his should be associated with juggling and trickery.

The conclusion is, that the conversion and Christian life of the Apostle furnish a powerful argument in favour of Christianity,—an argument, the force of which must be felt by all ingenuous reasoners. It is presumptuous, indeed, to pretend to fathom the counsels of the Most High, or to assign the reasons of his conduct on any given occasion. But, if it was God's purpose to present to the world, in one character and life, such an example of the power of the Gospel, and such a demonstration of its truth and divine origin, as would put infidelity to the blush, it could not have been more happily accomplished than in the history of this renowned Apostle. And if the Lord intended to give to the Church a system of belief and practice, tersely expressed, orderly arranged, complete in general principles, without descending to minuteness of detail, so as to form a code of faith and religion, binding on all,

and yet leaving scope for freedom of thought and variety of illustrations and uses, it must be granted that in the Pauline Epistles we see the intention fully carried out. Those Epistles have instructed and nurtured the Church in all ages. True godliness has always flourished in proportion as they were esteemed and studied. When they were kept out of sight, as they were during the ages of darkness (miscalled by some "the ages of faith"), piety became sickly—the manliness of Christian character was dwarfed—and the old idolatries crept in again under a religious garb. Luther, Tyndale, and their coadjutors, effected a blessed restoration in the sixteenth century. Paul was brought out of the obscurity in which he had been long hidden, and became once more the great light of the Church. In saying this, we have no wish to detract from the merits of the other writers of the New Testament. The severe morals of James—the evangelical discussions of Peter—the loving letters which John wrote, are indispensable supplements to the treatises of the former disciple of Gamaliel. Those treatises, nevertheless, are the fountain of the theology of the New Testament; while, in connection with the other apostolical writings, with which they are in full agreement, they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16). "One star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. xv. 41);

but they all derive their light from the same source. We shall not be understood to speak disparagingly of others when we affirm that in the Christian firmament the Apostle Paul shines as a star of the first magnitude.

CHAPTER X.

DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

General Remarks—Was Paul a Member of the Sanhedrim?—Alleged Discrepancies in the Accounts of his Conversion—The Treatment of Elymas—Paul's Conduct to Mark—Circumcision of Timothy—The Transactions at Jerusalem when Paul last visited that City—Examination of Rom. ix. 3; 1 Cor. i. 17—Supposed Mistake respecting the Second Coming of the Saviour—Examination of 1 Cor. v. 5; vii. 25; Acts xx. 25; 2 Tim. iii. 8.

Our Lord said, "It is impossible but that offences will come" (Luke xvii. 1); that is, human nature is so perverse, that it will either reply against God, or find fault with Him, or captiously criticise His words. If the doctrine of plenary and verbal inspiration be maintained, it is objected that man's mind is fettered, that he is used as a mere machine to record the dictations of the Holy Spirit, and that this state of things differs very little from that of the subjects of the Papacy, who acknowledge an infallible master, and are forbidden to think otherwise than as he directs them, on pain of excommunication. If, on the contrary, it be held that, while the thoughts are

God's, the words and the manner are special to the writer, and reflect his individual peculiarities, there are some who are ready to exclaim, "How loose and uncertain are the utterances of these books! Either the readings vary, so that we often know not whether we have the right text or not, or the interpretations differ to such a degree, that it is next to impossible to decide which deserves the preference." Or a despondent feeling may take possession of the mind, under the influence of which a man sits down in moping melancholy, making no effort, but resigning himself to inactivity, it may be to despair.

All this is wrong. God's Word is not a riddle or a paradox. It is "very pure," and, for the most part, very plain. That there are mysteries and deep things in it—"high as heaven"—"deep as hell"—defying all human power to reach or to fathom, must not be wondered at. It was to be expected. There must be marks of God in a Divine book. If the path is generally straight and plain, as it is, we must expect it to be now and then covered with mists or plunged in thick darkness—a "darkness which may be felt." Nor is this any unkindness on God's part. It is the offspring of necessity. He is the All-wise Creator; we are fallible, weak creatures, yet sadly prone to think of ourselves "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 5). That presumption must be checked and mortified, and nothing is so well adapted

to produce those effects as a stiff struggle with difficulties. We must sometimes be perplexed, baffled, overcome, driven to our wits' end, and it shall be "to humble us, to prove us, to know what is in our hearts" (Deut. viii. 2).

Nevertheless, let the inquirer be of good cheer. Very suitable and very precious are the words of the wise man:—"If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov. ii. 3—6). And so are the words of our Master:—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 7, 8). And the connection is observable. "Ask" is first, for wisdom cometh from God. Then follows seeking, as the miner laboriously pierces the earth, in his search for the hid treasures, or as the importunate applicant, who is not repelled, but continues knocking till the door is opened. Let a man pursue his biblical studies in such a spirit, and he will be rewarded with success.

Certain difficulties have been alleged, or fancied,

in the life and letters of the Apostle Paul. It may be useful to notice some of them.

I. In his defence before King Agrippa, he said, "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them" (Acts xxvi. 10).

Some find a difficulty here, arising from the fact that the "elders," or members of the Sanhedrim, were generally men advanced in years. Saul was a "young man;" it is not likely that he was much more than thirty years old at the time of Stephen's murder. Hence, it is argued that he could not be a member of the Sanhedrim, and that the expression "gave my voice" must be understood figuratively—"exerted all my influence" (*Dr. Adam Clarke*).

But the phrase is a technical phrase, and simply means "I voted." Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva English translate it, "I gave the sentence;" Dean Alford, in his revised version, "I gave my vote." It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and it would certainly appear very strange if, in the only place in which it is found, it should be figuratively understood. The Apostle says, "I voted." If so, he had a right to vote, and that implies membership of the Court by which the sentence was passed. As to the necessity for such members being men in years, it is sufficient to reply

that the original meaning of official designations soon fades away. The "alderman" was originally an "elder man;" but the appellation now imports office, not age.

There are some religious denominations in which the pastors are styled "elders." The practice prevails extensively in British North America. A young man of twenty-one is ordained; he is immediately dubbed "elder." We have known the appellation applied to licentiates—*incipient* "elders."

But it is affirmed that the Jews required their "elders" to be married men, as they would be less likely to be harsh in their treatment of criminals; and Paul, it is said, was not married. That cannot be proved; we have no evidence either way. He may have been married, and lost his wife, either by death or by desertion after he became a Christian. His unsettled mode of life and the troubles of the times (1 Cor. vii. 26) prevented him from marrying again, though he had full power to do so (1 Cor. ix. 5).

It must be remembered that the Jews were not permitted to *execute* a sentence of death (John xviii. 31). They could only find a man guilty. The case was then to be reported to the Roman governor, in whose hands was the power of life and death.

II. There are three accounts of the Apostle's conversion: one by Luke, and two by Paul himself

(Acts ix. 3—18; xxii. 6—16; xxvi. 12—18). Objectors maintain that there are variations and discrepancies in those accounts. There are no other variations in them than such as are likely to occur in all independent narratives. There are variations in the Gospels, each being written from the author's own standpoint; but the history is one and the same. So it is here. The only discrepancy, or seeming one, relates to the companions of Paul. Luke says that "they stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." Paul himself states that "they saw the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." These accounts are easily reconcilable. The men heard, and yet did not hear; it was a sound that struck their ears, but they could not distinguish any words;—and what wonder? The dazzling light—the violent fall—the invisible speaker—all conspired to terrify them. They were so confused that they could not give a straightforward account of what took place. All they could say was that they heard a strange noise as of some one speaking, but they saw no speaker, and they were too much alarmed to pay such attention as to understand what was spoken.

III. The judgment on Elymas, the sorcerer, is complained of, as contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and the teachings of the Saviour (Acts xiii. 8—11).

Our Lord's miracles were miracles of goodness. The only act of judgment was the cursing of the fig-tree; for the expulsion of the traders from the temple precincts was an act of authority, and so manifestly suitable and just, that it excited no surprise, and brought down upon Him no censure. But after He had left the world the aspect of affairs changed. It was not to be expected that men would show the same reverence for the servants as they had shown to the Master. It was useless to attempt to deceive Him, for "He knew what was in man" (John ii. 25). But success was to be hoped for in an attempt to overreach Peter or to withstand Paul. It was desirable that such purposes should be nipt in the bud. The Lord saw fit to interpose specially for the vindication of apostolic honour. Ananias and Sapphira had no imitators for a long while. That double burial within three hours was a crushing blow to the trade in hypocrisy. And it will be confessed, we think, that it was highly proper to signalise the commencement of Paul's more public career by such a display of divine approval as might at once confirm the confidence of his brethren, and admonish opposers of the peril of their course. God's judgments are always just. He does not ask us to excuse Him for the exercise of severity. He knows best when it is required. And it is wiser, more reasonable, and more pious, to submit to His will than to pre-

sume to murmur at His arrangements. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

It must not be forgotten, however, that mercy was mingled with judgment. Elymas's blindness was a temporary infliction; he was not to "see the sun *for a season.*" We know not how long it lasted. But he "saw the sun" again; and we may indulge the conviction that, whether he became a believer or not, he refrained thereafter from attempts to turn others from the faith.

IV. Some see much harshness in Paul's treatment of Mark.

That young man accompanied his uncle Barnabas, and the Apostle, on their missionary tour. "They had John to their minister"—that is, their attendant (Acts xiii. v). But after they had passed through Cyprus, and were about to rough it in the regions of Asia Minor, his heart failed him, and he "departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work" (Acts xv. 38). Barnabas, who was much attached to his nephew, wished to take him with them on their second journey, but Paul objected to it. His former conduct had shown a want of courage, which might reappear, and would then be more injurious; for they were about to "visit the brethren in every city where they had preached the Word of the Lord," and an example of unsteadiness, not to say cowardice, might have a disastrous

effect. Mark, too, was a stranger to the disciples. They would be likely enough to make inquiries respecting him, so that the story of his weakness would leak out, to his disparagement and to their grief and loss, since his influence among them would cease when the facts became known. Barnabas failed to see the reasonableness of Paul's decision, and "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other" (Acts xv. 39).

Barnabas does not reappear in the history. When he separated from Paul he went to his own country, Cyprus, taking Mark with him. The sacred narrative mentions him no more.

But Mark reappears, and in connection with Paul. The Apostle harboured no resentment. Though he judged it inappropriate that his young friend should accompany him on that journey, he recognised his qualifications for Christian work, and admitted him afterwards among the workmen. Writing from Rome during his first imprisonment, he speaks of Mark as one of his "fellowlabourers" (Philemon 24), and directs the Colossians to "receive him" (Col. iv. 10). Some years afterwards, when imprisoned again, and uncertain as to the issue, he was desirous of the assistance and relief which Mark might render him. He had proved his assiduity and kindness. "Take Mark," he said to Timothy, "and bring him with

thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry" ("he is serviceable to me for ministering"—*Ellicott*) —2 Tim. iv. 11.

V. The circumcision of Timothy has been a stumbling-block to many.

The facts are thus narrated: "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek" (Acts xvi. 1—3). It was a peculiar case. On his mother's side, Timothy was a Jew; on his father's, a Greek. Consequently, he had been brought up as a Greek. Having become a Christian, and evincing excellent qualities for the ministry, Paul determined to secure him. But the Jewish element was strong in that quarter. The employment of an uncircumcised man would have been so offensive to some, that it would not be prudent to risk their displeasure. "Circumstances alter cases." When Paul could "become a Jew," without the sacrifice of principle, he was willing to do it, "that he might gain the Jews" (1 Cor. ix. 20). But when certain contentious men insisted on

submission to circumcision, as essential to a valid Christian profession, or even to salvation, he stood firm as a rock. To such men he "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour" (Gal. ii. 5). The Galatians were told that they must choose between Christ and Moses; salvation could not be shared between them. "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. v. 2). In circumcising Timothy, he condescended to weakness, and sought to conciliate prejudice; in withstanding the demand for the circumcision of Titus, he was the champion of Christian truth and Christian freedom.

IV. The transactions at Jerusalem, on the Apostle's last visit to that city, require explanation.

The Christian Jews at Jerusalem were numbered by myriads. They were all "zealous of the law" (Acts xxi. 20), and in fact seem to have united law and gospel in a somewhat strange way. The proposition made to Paul by the elders, that he should assume the expenses of the four men who had a Nazarite vow upon them, so that the people might see that "he himself walked orderly and kept the law" (Acts xxi. 24), must have been almost too much for even his charitableness; that he yielded, must be considered as a strong proof of his determination to go to the very verge of consistency, if by any means, within the limits of right, he might further the

interests of Christianity. Still, it must be confessed that the words of the elders can scarcely be justified. They wished the people to be convinced that Paul "walked orderly." Now, he *did not* so walk, in Gentile countries; he claimed and exercised freedom. If he chose, in compliance with the elders, to "walk orderly" in Jerusalem, that fact would not bear the large inference which they connected with it. It is not worth while to defend them, nor is it necessary to utter unqualified condemnation. More information is needed: in its absence, we must place this matter among undecided questions. Yet, as far as Paul is concerned, there is no need of a laboured defence. *His* meaning was clear: he was willing to conform to Jewish ceremonial for the time being, if in so doing no Christian principles were compromised. If others put a construction on his conduct which it would not fairly bear, that was their fault, and he was not accountable for it.

It is not unusual for persons to draw hasty conclusions from results. Paul's action on the occasion now under notice led to his imprisonment, and that to his voyage to Rome, and his residence in that city, with its momentous consequences. So God overruled man's evil designs, for the good of His Church. But that does not change the character of those designs, nor lessen the guilt of the parties. Our Lord's death was brought about "by the determinate

counsel and foreknowledge of God;" but "wicked hands" slew him (Acts ii. 23).

VII. The Apostle's refusal to undergo the punishment of scourging is represented by some as an act of disobedience to our Lord's injunction in Matt. v. 38—41.

Religion has suffered great injury from injudicious interpretations of Scripture, and especially from literal applications of passages which were only intended to inculcate general principles. The Lord taught that if the right hand, the right foot, or the right eye caused a person to offend, the eye was to be plucked out, and the hand or the foot cut off. Now, if that was meant for a law, it became a dead letter as soon as it was issued. Origen, it is true, yielded literal obedience; and Cranmer, in his martyrdom, punished "that unworthy right hand;" but the spiritual rather than the literal submission is generally held by Christians to be the result of correct interpretation.

The Saviour forbade retaliation. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." Retaliation is useless, and it is endless, creating fresh offences and exciting new crimes. The blood-feuds of the Arabs are perpetual sources of misery. Jesus says, "Rather suffer wrong than do wrong: shun contention: do not provoke an

adversary, but soothe and soften him by a gentle spirit. Obey at all times, and in regard to all persons, the 'royal law.'"

But this does not touch the question of public rights. The Christian is a citizen, and his privileges, as such, are of great value. The welfare of society depends on the preservation of civic rights. The Christian may sometimes care but little for the personal annoyance or injury which may be inflicted on him; but the rights of his fellow-citizens are to be guarded as well as his own; and he may find it to be his duty to resist oppression for the sake of the community, when, on his own account, he might not have taken the trouble to leave his threshold for the purpose. Christianity is not only "consistent with the love of freedom," as Robert Hall eloquently pleaded, but is its surest guarantee.

The Apostle Paul thoroughly understood this, and shaped his course accordingly. He submitted, at one time; he protested, at another. At Philippi he was scourged, and "thrust into the inner prison," where he quietly waited the Lord's deliverance. Those magistrates, however, had suffered themselves to be overborne by a mob, and had broken the law. They were liable to prosecution. Paul combined the meek and the firm. He forbore to prosecute, and thus gained favourable consideration for the Christians whom he was leaving at Philippi; he

compelled the officials to apologise, and taught them a salutary lesson, which they were not likely to forget on other occasions.

The incident at Jerusalem was of a different complexion. Obtaining evidence by torture was a barbarism, which it was very desirable to expose. An opportunity was offered. They bound the Apostle to the whipping-post, to be "examined by scourging." "Take care," said he to the centurion: "mind what you are about. You have a Roman citizen before you, who has been neither tried nor judged. Examination by torture is bad enough in all cases; but beware how you touch a Roman citizen." "Why," said the chief captain, "you don't look like a rich man: that citizenship cost me a large sum of money." "It cost me nothing," replied the Apostle; "I was free born." The torturers slunk away: "and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him" (Acts xxii. 29). Nor can it be doubted that many a Roman citizen who afterwards fell into Lysias' hand was saved from scourging by Paul's opportune protest: and so the Apostle was a benefactor to the community.

The wise man says, "There is a time to every purpose under heaven" (Eccles. iii. 1). A strict observance of the *letter* may be required to-day—and, in some instances, is *the* requirement—as in all

positive institutions; a liberal interpretation, according to the *spirit*, may meet the case to-morrow. Happy is he who has the wisdom that is "profitable to direct" (Eccles. x. 10)!

VIII. The Apostle's address to Ananias, the high priest, has been censured as wanting in the respect due to constituted authorities (Acts xxiii. 3).

The Apostle knew the men before whom he appeared, and hoped, by appealing to their better feelings, to stop the prosecution. "Men and brethren," he said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." He wished them to understand that his course, all his life long, had been guided by conscientious conviction. It was no freak of fancy, no burst of fanaticism. When he was leagued with them in the persecution, he "verily thought that *he ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9). When he was better informed, and joined the Christians, his new mode of life was governed in the same way. It was not hatred of his countrymen, or hostility to their religion. He was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and that it was his duty to advance the interests of Christianity. He had no worldly ends in view, nor did he wish to disturb the peace of society. He only asked to be unmolested in serving God.

"Stop his mouth!" said the high priest. It was

done accordingly, though not with a gentle blow.* It was an act of illegal violence, far below the dignity of a high priest. Paul's indignation was roused. He broke forth in burning words, and in true Eastern style—"God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" (See Matt. xxiii. 27.)

Some think that Paul spoke prophetically, predicting Ananias's death, who was assassinated some years afterwards, and, therefore, that he was authorised in addressing the high priest in that manner.—*Dr. Adam Clarke, in loc.*

But as Moses "spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Psalm cvi. 33), and Peter betrayed unmanly weakness, we need not be surprised that even Paul should yield to provocation; and it is not necessary to defend him in such a case. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20).

Dr. Hackett observes: "Paul admits that he had been thrown off his guard; the insult had touched him to the quick, and he had spoken rashly. But what can surpass the grace with which he recovered his self-possession, the frankness with which he acknowledged his error? If his conduct in yielding to the momentary impulse was not that of Christ

* This mode of enjoining silence is still practised in Persia. Some offenders were beaten; "when they attempted to say anything in their defence, they were struck on the mouth."—*Hackett, in loc.*

Himself under a similar provocation (John xviii. 22, 23), certainly the manner in which he atoned for his fault was *Christ-like*."—*In loc.*

Dean Alford says: "Our blessed Saviour is to us, in all His words and acts, the *perfect pattern for all, under all circumstances;* by aiming at whatever He did in each case, we shall do best: but even the greatest of His Apostles are *so far* our patterns only, as they *followed Him*, which certainly in this case Paul *did not*. That Paul thus answered, might go far to *excuse* a like fervid reply in a Christian or a minister of the Gospel,—but must never be used to *justify* it: it may serve for an *apology*, but never for an *example*." — *Greek Testament*, ii. 233, Second Edition.

No doubt when Paul's conduct is compared with the calmness, gentleness, and self-denial of Jesus (John xviii. 23), his warmth of temper becomes evident. Still, we ought not to be too rigid in forming a judgment respecting the Apostle. It is true that, in our excessively refined age, the servants of Christ cannot commit a greater sin than when they exhibit impetuosity: the remark is at once made that they should have been more circumspect. This may be true; but then, let it be considered that they have exposed themselves to every danger, and, weak as they are, chose their position in front of the army. It is surely better to be unskilful advocates of the

Lord, than, through excessive caution, to resign the whole work to others. It may be also remarked, that if Luther, for instance, had been in Paul's place, he would have spoken with far more severity."—*Lange's Commentary—Acts*—p. 411.

IX. It is objected that when the Apostle said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts xxiii. 6), he took unworthy advantage of his opponents.

By no means. Paul knew that his case was prejudged, and that before that tribunal he could not expect a fair hearing. Herod and Pilate became friends when Jesus was to be put to death. Pharisees and Sadducees, mortally as they hated each other could agree in persecuting Christ's servant. If they could be divided, it might be possible to save him. It was skilfully done. Paul saw his opportunity, and was not slow to embrace it. By claiming union with the Pharisees on one important point, he engaged their sympathy, and set them at variance with the other party. The object was gained for that time. In the confusion and uproar the Apostle was safely conveyed away.

X. How shall those strange words be explained—"I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3)?

There are two principal explanations. The first supposes a mistranslation, and would render the

phrase thus—"For I myself did wish to be accursed from Christ:" as if the Apostle should say—"I was myself utterly estranged from Christ. Had I died in that state, I must have been lost for ever. I know the peril of that condition. Such is the condition, and such the danger of my countrymen. O that I could save them!"

The second admits the common translation to be correct, and holds the meaning to be—"I would endure anything for the salvation of my countrymen. If it were possible, I would be willing to be lost, that they might be saved." But it was not possible. "The objective impossibility did not destroy the subjective intensity of feeling. And although he may not have actually formed the wish, still any student of human nature knows that feelings often exist, never taking shape in definite wish, which are contrary both to what is possible, and what is actually wished."—*Lange's Commentary.*

The second explanation is now generally adopted.

XI. Paul says, that Christ "sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. i. 17). How is that to be understood?

In the same way as the Lord's words (John vi. 27), "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." They evidently mean, "Labour *not so much for* the meat which perisheth," &c. So here: "Christ sent

me not so much to baptize as to preach the Gospel." When Cornelius and his friends were converted, Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts x. 48). Paul seems to have adopted the same course. He preached: God blessed the word: his companions baptized the converts. And there was a special reason for it—"Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name;" for the Corinthians were noted for partisanship "every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" We smile at their folly; but human nature in the nineteenth century is as weak and foolish as it was in the first—as numberless miserable splittings clearly show.

XII. Was not Paul himself mistaken respecting the second coming of the Saviour? Did he not, at first, look for that event as likely to occur in his own lifetime?

Admit it. What follows? Nothing more than this, that the will of the Lord was gradually made known, even to inspired men. All truth was not revealed at first. From the Lord's last teachings it might be inferred that His return to earth, to complete His triumphs and punish His foes, would not only take place suddenly, but might occur at any

time, so that Christians should expect it, as we find in fact that they did. The Corinthians are described as "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7). Five years or so before that letter was written, Paul had assured the Thessalonians that "that day would not come, except there come a falling away first" (2 Thess. ii. 3). The preliminary sign, the revelation of "the man of sin," had not appeared; but the time of His appearance was not revealed, nor the length of His continuance. The time might be long, or it might be short. No one could tell, and therefore Christians might very properly be spoken of as "waiting." Eighteen hundred years have passed away since then, and the Lord has not yet come. Some Christian brethren profess to be looking for Him daily; but others think that though He will certainly come "as a thief in the night," the predictions of the Word of God must be first fulfilled, and great changes be experienced, both in the world and in the Church. Those revolutions will require the lapse of many centuries; or, on the other hand (who can tell?)—in the latter times—"a nation may be born in a day." "It is not for you," said the Redeemer, "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts i. 7). Let us work and wait. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it;

because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii. 3). The glorified Church is waiting and wondering ("How long, O Lord?")—apostles and martyrs are astonished at the delay (Rev. vi. 9—11). But—

> "God is His own interpreter,
> And He will make it plain."

XIII. What shall be said of the "delivering unto Satan" (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20)?

That it was no arbitrary, unfeeling act, importing malice, or passionate fury, but a solemn adjudication of judgment, by apostolic authority, for immoral conduct, or departure from the faith. Expulsion from Christian fellowship, by the vote of the Church, was probably a part of the infliction. It certainly was, in the case reported in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. But the bodily chastisement was of the miraculous kind; and if the words used are to be literally interpreted, the apostles, who often rescued some from Satan, delivered others into his power, though only as regarded their bodies; the declared object of the punishment being "that the spirit might be saved." We may be assured that the exercise of this tremendous power would be guarded by prudence, and checked by charity; but it must be granted that there are difficulties connected with the subject, which in the present state of our knowledge it is hardly possible to remove. Happily, they affect no important truth or branch of Christian law.

XIV. Paul, it is affirmed, disavowed inspiration, in 1 Cor. vii. 6, 25: the question then is, How does that disavowal affect his inspired authority at other times?

If it should appear that he did disavow inspiration in regard to the particular matter in hand, the only inference would be that it was a case of exception. On other points he was taught by the Spirit of God, and infallibly guided. In this case he was left to the exercise of his own judgment.

There is no need, however, to resort to such an explanation. Inspiration, whatever may be the true and full meaning of the word (which is greatly disputed), does not deprive a man of the use of his own mental powers, nor release him from the obligation to inquire and examine. He is called on to use his best endeavours to discover truth or duty (as the prophets "enquired and searched diligently"—1 Pet. i. 10), with the promise of the special aid of the Holy Spirit, to preserve him from mistake. Accordingly, when a question arose respecting unmarried young females, Paul examined the records of the Saviour's life, and the history of supernatural communications, as far as they had then been delivered; and the conclusion was, that there was "no commandment of the Lord." It was a case not provided for. Reflecting on all the circumstances, and looking to the Lord for light and guidance, he

judged that "in the present distress" a single life was the preferable state, unless, indeed, any of them felt under a necessity, and could not control themselves. Having adverted to some special features of these phenomena, and given advice accordingly, he declared his satisfaction with the result, in the sentence, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. vii. 40).

XV. Paul told the Ephesian elders that they would "see his face no more" (Acts xx. 25); but it seems highly probable that he revisited Ephesus after his first imprisonment (2 Tim. i. 18). How shall we reconcile these things?

It may be remarked, in the first place, that the revisiting of Ephesus, though it bears the appearance of probability, cannot be taken as a fact.

But, in the second place, it is not to be supposed that inspiration reached to every event and circumstance in the inspired man's life. All appearances were against that second visit. So assured was the Apostle that martyrdom awaited him, that he bade farewell to his brethren, under the impression that their next meeting would be in the better world. His deliverance from the existing peril, and his resumption of apostolic labour, were as unexpected to himself as they were gratifying to the churches and favourable to Christian interests at large. It was no disparagement to his inspiration that he could not

foresee that which proved to be really his last visit to Ephesus.

XVI. The reference to "Jannes and Jambres," the magicians who "withstood Moses" (2 Tim. iii. 8), but whose names do not appear in any inspired narrative, has been considered by some as scarcely consistent with the Apostle's inspiration.

Why not? It is true that the names of those men were not recorded by Moses. But they were handed down by a very ancient Hebrew tradition, the truth of which was maintained by the Jews. Bishop Ellicott remarks:—"Objections urged against the introduction of these names, when gravely considered, will be found of no weight whatever. Why was the inspired Apostle not to remind Timothy of the ancient traditions of his country, and to recite two names which there is every reason to suppose were too closely connected with the early history of the nation to be easily forgotten?" (*In loc.*)

In conclusion, it may be observed that the existence of difficulties in Scripture records, some of which cannot possibly be removed, in the present state of our knowledge, ought not to be regarded as surprising. It is common to all ancient productions. The authors wrote for the times in which they lived, and for the people of those times. Many expressions which are now obscure were plain to the first readers. Many allusions, the pertinence of which

cannot now be discerned, were perfectly well understood when the books were published. If the works in question were originally characterised by brevity, the difficulties are increased in proportion to the distance from the time of publication, and we are reminded of the remark so often made by Bishop Butler, that if we knew all the facts of the case we should be better able to form a judgment. But our ignorance is the barrier, and we cannot remove it. As was said before, this is not peculiar to the Scriptures, but is common to them and all works of antiquity. God might have prevented it, as far as relates to the inspired volume, by enabling His servants to write so as not to be misunderstood, either through obscure diction or defective statements. But this would have been excessive interference, unlike the ordinary practice of the Divine Being. In the preparation of the books of the Bible, the usual laws of composition were observed; and whatever guidance or restraint the writers experienced as to the *matter* of their writing, it seems evident that in regard to the *manner* they were left to the freedom of their own minds, and the intellectual habits of the times and countries in which they respectively lived.

Once more. The sacred writers did not anticipate difficulties or objections. They were conscious of truthfulness and integrity, and could not write as

persons who were under suspicion, and who felt that they must make an effort to be believed. They composed their books in their own way, expecting them to be received according to their merits. When handed down to posterity, the books were liable to the same accidents as other books. The lapse of centuries has thrown a mistiness over the writings of all ancient authors; but it may be confidently affirmed that the tracts which compose the Bible, and which were written at different periods, and by men differing greatly from one another in mental powers and acquirements, during a space of about fifteen hundred years, are freer from the dark and unintelligible than the compositions, generally, of the same ages, issued in the countries of heathendom. We might safely go much farther, and challenge for the Bible the highest rank, in a literary point of view. It stands alone, like the diamond amongst gems, sparkling in its own brilliance.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

PAUL'S VOYAGE.

LUKE'S truthfulness as a historian, and his marvellous accuracy in the use of words, especially geographical and nautical terms, and terms denoting official distinctions, have been admitted by all impartial critics. His history of the Acts of the Apostles has been subjected to rigid scrutiny, without in the least impairing its credit, or shaking the confidence of the friends of revelation. On the contrary, modern research has removed difficulties which had perplexed early inquirers, and shown Luke to be an honest and correct writer, whose statements may be received without hesitation, and implicitly relied on. One portion of the book has been selected by a modern author as the subject of a distinct treatise. The reference is to the excellent monograph on "The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," by "James

Smith, of Jordanhill, Esq., F.R.S., &c.," to which recent commentators on the New Testament have been greatly indebted. It is a work which should find a place in every biblical student's library, being not only a triumphant vindication of the sacred historian, but also a model of thorough and fair inquiry.

The author is chiefly indebted to Mr. Smith's volume for the materials of the following notes on the record of the Apostle's voyage, as contained in the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts.

Verse 3. "The next day we touched at Sidon." The distance from Cæsarea to Sidon is about sixty-seven miles—a moderate day's sail for an ancient ship, with a fair wind.

Verse 4. "We sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary." The ship belonged to Adramyttium, which lay to the north-west of Sidon; but, as westerly winds prevail in the Mediterranean at that season of the year, it was impossible to take a straight course to Adramyttium. They determined, therefore, to sail in a northerly direction, which led them to the east of Cyprus. "In pursuing this route, they acted precisely as the most accomplished seaman at the present day would have done under similar circumstances; by standing to the north till they reached the coast of Cilicia, they might expect, when they did so, to be favoured by

the land wind, which prevails there during the summer months, as well as by the current, which constantly runs to the westward, along the south coast of Asia Minor" (*Smith*, p. 67).

Verse 6. At Myra, they "found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy." Myra lay almost due north of Alexandria, and the whole breadth of the Mediterranean was between them. It might have been thought that the ship was out of her way, but it was evidently the best course that could be adopted; for it was easy, with a westerly breeze, to run across to Myra, and there they might hope for a change of wind.

Verse 7. "And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone." "An inspection of the map will show that their course hither from Cnidus must have been nearly south. The wind drove them in this direction. It has been said that they avoided the northern side of Crete, because it furnished no good ports; but such is not the fact. Soodra and Longa Spina are excellent harbours on that side of the island. Having passed round Salmone, they would find a north-west wind as much opposed to them in navigating to the westward as it had been between Myra and Cnidus; but, on the other hand, they would have for a time a similar advantage: the

south side of Crete is a weather-shore, and with a north-west wind they could advance along the coast until they reached that part of it which turns decidedly towards the north. Here they would be obliged to seek a harbour, and wait until the wind changed. The course of movement indicated by Luke tallies exactly with these conditions" (*Hackett on the Acts*).

Verse 8. "A place which is called the Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea." Dr. Pococke says (*Travels in the East*, ii. 250): "In searching after Lebena farther to the west, I found out a place which I thought to be of greater consequence, because mentioned in Holy Scripture, and also honoured by the presence of St. Paul—that is, the Fair Havens, near unto the city of Lasea; for there is another small bay, about two leagues to the east of Matala, which is now called by the Greeks, Good or Fair Havens." In a book of old sailing directions, published in 1621, the place is thus referred to: "Right to the east of Cabra (an islet) lies a fair bay, where there is good anchorage; there is also one, immediately to the west of it, where there is also good achorage" (quoted by Mr. Smith). Mr. Smith observes: "Its position is precisely that where a ship, circumstanced as St. Paul's was, must have put in. I have already shown that the wind must have been about N.W.; but with such a wind she could

not pass Cape Matala; we must therefore look near, but to the eastward of this promontory, for an anchorage well calculated to shelter a vessel in north-west winds, but not from all winds, otherwise it would not have been, in the opinion of seamen, an unsafe winter harbour. Now, here we have a harbour which not only fulfils every one of the conditions, but still retains the name given to it by St. Luke" (p. 82).

The city Lasæa was long lost to the world, and has only of late been rediscovered. "Four or five years ago" (Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* is now quoted) "it would have been impossible to give any information regarding this Cretan city, except indeed that it might be presumed to be identical with the 'Lisia' mentioned in the *Pentinger Table* as 16 miles to the east of GORTYNSE. This corresponds sufficiently with what is said in Acts xxvii. 8 of its proximity to Fair Havens. The whole matter, however, has been recently cleared up. In the month of January, 1856, a yachting party made inquiries at Fair Havens, and were told that the name Lasæa was still given to some ruins a few miles to the eastward. A short search sufficed to discover these ruins, and independent testimony confirmed the name. A full account of the discovery, with a plan, is given in the second edition of Smith's *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, app. iii., pp. 262, 263."

"The travellers were not only directed to the place for which they inquired, but on asking the peasants on the spot what the place was called were told 'Lasæce.' It lies just east of Fair Havens, and shows traces of an important town. Two white pillars, masses of masonry, and ruins of temples are found there" (*Hackett, in loc*).

Verse 12. "The haven was not commodious to winter in." There is good anchorage ground at Fair Havens, but the bay, as Mr. Smith remarks, is "open to nearly one-half of the compass," and, therefore, "could not have been a good winter harbour" (p. 84).

Ibid. "Phenice.... an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west." There is some difference of opinion as to the meaning of this phrase. Mr. Smith says: "I apprehend it means '*in the same direction as*' (in Latin, *secundum*); if I am right, *βλέποντα κατὰ λίζα* does not mean, as is generally supposed, that it is open to the point *from* which that wind (libs) blows, but to the point *towards* which it blows—that is, it is not open to the south-west but to the north-east" (p. 86). This explanation is applicable to *Lutro*, the modern name of *Phenice*. Captain Spratt, R.N., writing to Mr. Smith, says: "Having in 1853 examined generally the south coast of Crete, I was fully convinced that Lutro was the Phenice of St. Paul, for it is the only

bay to the westward of Fair Havens in which a vessel of any size could find any shelter during the winter months." The health officer of the port stated that "though the harbour is open to the east, yet the easterly gales never blow home, being *lifted* by the high land behind, and that even in storms the sea rolls in gently; he said, *it is the only secure harbour in all winds on the south coast of Crete.*" We may add that the name of Phenice is still preserved by the natives (*Smith*, p. 89).

Phenice was but about half-a-day's sail from Fair Havens, and when they left the latter place they expected to be in a safe winter harbour before night. "But not long after there arose against it ("there blew from the shore"—*Alford*) a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon" (v. 14). This frequently happens in that part of the Mediterranean. Captain Spratt gives the following account: "In respect to the gale of wind I met with after starting from Fair Havens for Messara Bay, we left *with a light southerly wind* and a clear sky—every indication of a fine day, until we rounded the cape (Matala), to haul up for the head of the bay. Then we saw Mount Ida covered in a dense cloud, and met a strong northerly breeze—one of the summer gales so frequent in the Levant, but which in general are accompanied by terrific gusts from those high mountains, the wind blowing direct from Mount Ida." Another naval

officer, Capt. J. Stewart, in his remarks on the Archipelago, observes: "It is always safe to anchor under the lee of an island with a northerly wind, as it dies away gradually; but it would be extremely dangerous with southerly winds, as they almost invariably shift to a violent northerly wind." (*Smith*, pp. 97, 99).

Verse 17. "They used helps, undergirding the ship." It is probable that the ship had sprung a leak, and showed such symptoms of weakness in her hull, that if some means of strengthening her could not be devised, she would founder at sea. "To pap a ship" (the technical term for *undergirding*), says Falconer, in his Marine Dictionary, "is to pass four or five turns of a large cable-laid rope round the hull or frame of a ship, to support her in a great storm, or otherwise, when it is apprehended that she is not strong enough to resist the violent efforts of the sea; this expedient, however, is rarely put in practice." But though it is rarely put in practice, several instances of the adoption of this expedient are on record. It is sufficient to quote one. Captain Back's ship, when he returned from his Arctic voyage in 1837, was in such a damaged state that it was found necessary to resort to undergirding. It was done in this way:—"A length of the stream chain-cable was passed under the bottom of the ship four feet before the mizen mast, hove tight by the capstan,

and finally immovably fixed to the ring-bolts on the quarter-deck. The effect was at once manifested by a great diminution in the working of the parts already mentioned; and in a less agreeable way, by impeding her rate of sailing; a trifling consideration, however, when compared with the benefit received." (Quoted by Smith, pp. 105, 106.)

Verse 17. "Strake sail, and so were driven." Mr. Smith remarks that this is an erroneous translation. "It is, in fact, equivalent to saying that, fearing a certain danger, they deprived themselves of the only possible means of avoiding it. It is not by striking mast or sail that such dangers are to be avoided" (p. 106). He renders the phrase, "lowered the gear." Dean Alford's version is, "lowered our top-gear," that is, brought down on the deck all the spars and sails that could be conveniently removed.

Verse 19. "And on the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship." Mr. Smith supposes that "the main-yard is meant; an immense spar, probably as long as the ship, and which would require the united efforts of passengers and crew to launch overboard. The relief which a ship would experience by this, would be of the same kind as in a modern ship when the guns are thrown overboard" (p. 112). Perhaps the word includes everything movable, and which was not absolutely necessary to be retained.

The scene next described by Luke is one of the finest instances of the moral sublime ever placed on record. The wind was howling through the rigging; the waves bore the vessel on their crests, and then hurled her down with such violence that it seemed impossible for her to right herself again; so much water was shipped every time that they were all drenched; it was impossible to cook food for any regular meal; "neither sun nor stars for many days appeared;" they could not tell where they were, for no shore was in sight; in short, their condition seemed hopeless, and they were resigning themselves to utter despair, expecting, every time the ship plunged, to go to the bottom with her. It was under such circumstances that "Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Therefore, sirs, be of good cheer: FOR I BELIEVE GOD, THAT IT SHALL BE EVEN AS IT WAS TOLD ME."

Noble man! All around him were helpless and

hopeless; death stared them in the face; but "I BELIEVE GOD!" There was the victory of faith—the "perfect peace"—the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Nothing can equal this!

Verse 27. "When the fourteenth night was come." So long they had been "exceedingly tossed with a tempest." The gale was blowing from the E.N.E., and the only method by which they could avoid being driven on the quicksands on the coast of Africa was that which is always practised in a storm at sea. The ship was "hove-to"—"with her head to the N."—and storm-sails set—and suffered to drift. The direction of the drift, if the storm continued, would be to Malta, and there, accordingly, the shipwreck occurred.

Malta is 476 miles from the island of Clauda, near which they were when the storm began. How long would it take a ship, drifting in a gale, to pass over that space? Mr. Smith furnishes some curious information on that point.

"In order to ascertain what might be supposed to be the mean rate of drift of a ship circumstanced as that of St. Paul's was, I consulted two nautical friends, both of them at the time commanding ships in Valetta harbour, and both of them familiar with the navigation of the Levant. To the first of these officers whom I met with (the late Captain W.

McLean, R.N.), I put the question, 'What would you say would be the probable rate of drift of a ship hove-to in a gale of wind?' His answer was, 'That depends on the force of the gale and the size of the ship.' Upon explaining that I considered it a large ship, even as compared with modern merchantmen, and that the gale might be reckoned as one of mean intensity, he said, after considering the matter, that, speaking in round numbers, forty miles in twenty-four hours might be reckoned a fair allowance. I put the same question to Captain Graves, R.N., who replied, 'From three-quarters of a mile an hour to two miles an hour.' The mean of these extremes is thirty-three miles in twenty-four hours, and the mean of both estimates is thirty-six and a half miles in twenty-four hours.

"I come now to the time elapsed. It is quite clear, from the narrative, that St. Luke counts the time from the day the ship left Fair Havens. We hear of the 'third day' (v. 19); the preceding is termed 'next day,' which brings us to the first day, both of the gale and the voyage. It is also clear that the events of that day must have occupied a large portion of it. The time consumed in driving through the Sea of Adria, from the time they left the island of Clauda till they became aware of the vicinity of land at midnight of the fourteenth day, is, therefore, thirteen days complete, and a small

fraction. But the distance of Clauda to the point of Koura, where I suppose that this happened, is 476·6 miles, which, at the rate as deduced from the information of Captains McLean and Graves, would take exactly thirteen days, one hour, and twenty-one minutes. . . .

"A ship, starting late in the evening from Clauda, would, by midnight on the 14th, be less than three miles from the entrance of St. Paul's Bay [in Malta]. I admit that a coincidence so very close as this is, is to a certain extent accidental; but it is an accident which could not have happened had there been any inaccuracy on the part of the author of the narrative with regard to the numerous incidents upon which the calculations are founded, or had the ship been wrecked anywhere but at Malta; for there is no other place agreeing, either in name or description, within the limits to which we are tied down by calculations founded upon the narrative" (pp. 121—124).

At the entrance to St. Paul's Bay, within which the shipwreck took place, the coast is rocky, and the noise of the breakers gives warning of danger. So we are told that "about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country" (v. 27). On sounding, they found a depth of twenty fathoms. When "they had gone a little farther" (v. 28) the depth had decreased to fifteen fathoms, and the dashing of the waves on the rocks showed

them that it was high time to take measures for their safety. "They cast four anchors out of the stern;" by doing which the ship was in the best position for being run ashore, because, as soon as the foresail was hoisted and the cables cut away, she could be easily directed in the proper course.

On the supposition that St. Paul's Bay was the scene of the shipwreck, all these statements agree with the existing facts: the good holding ground for anchorage at the entrance of the Bay—the rocky coast—the "place where two seas met," that collision being occasioned by the water rushing through the channel that separates Selmonetta Island from the coast, and meeting the main stream down the bay:—these, and other particulars that might be mentioned, will satisfy the inquirer that the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts is a narration of facts by a trustworthy historian.

Once more. "They ran the ship aground, and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves" (v. 41). As Mr. Smith observes, "This is a remarkable circumstance, which, but for the peculiar nature of the bottom of St. Paul's Bay, it would be difficult to account for. The rocks of Malta disintegrate into extremely minute particles of sand and clay, which, when acted upon by the currents, or surface agitation, form a deposit of tenacious

clay; but, in still water, where these causes do not act, mud is formed; but it is only in the creeks where there are no currents, and at such a depth as to be undisturbed by the waves, that the mud occurs. In Admiral Smyth's chart of the bay the nearest soundings to the mud indicate a depth of about three fathoms, which is about what a large ship would draw. A ship, therefore, impelled by the force of a gale, into a creek with a bottom such as that laid down in the chart, would strike a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself, and be held fast, whilst the stern was exposed to the force of the waves" (p. 139).

Surely, an impartial reader cannot resist the conclusion that this is a true narrative, and that the writer actually witnessed the whole transaction and shared the peril. It is very rarely that such an accumulation of proofs and illustrations is furnished. The description is throughout so natural and so graphic, that a conviction of the writer's veracity is unavoidable. Even sceptics will admit that we have here a true story. That there is more than truth—that is, that Luke enjoyed the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit, every Christian believes.

No. II.

THE MAMERTINE PRISON.

"ECCLESIATICAL tradition" is in many respects but another expression for forgery and falsehood. The last Apostle had been dead scarcely a century when men began to lie and invent in the interest of religion, and fiction often took the place of history. Hence the misrepresentations with which church records abound. As an instance, reference may be made to the statement that the Church at Rome was founded by the joint labours of the Apostles Peter and Paul, which is repeated by all Roman Catholic historians, and believed by Roman Catholics generally. The first author in whose works it appears is Irenæus (Advers. Hæres. Lib. iii. cap. 3), who wrote towards the end of the second century. But the assertion is contradicted, as far as the Apostle Paul is concerned, by his own declaration, in his Epistle to the Roman Church, written about A.D. 58. The declaration is couched in these words:—"I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready

to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also" (ch. i. 13—15). That quotation is decisive.

The supposition that Peter had anything to do with the establishment of the Church at Rome is entirely inconsistent with the evidence of Scripture, and cannot be made to harmonise with the known facts of the Apostle's life. It is, besides, very unaccountable, if Peter was bishop of Rome (that is, pastor of the Church in that city), that Paul, in his Epistle to the Church, does not allude to it, and that the name of the senior Apostle is not once mentioned. The current traditions are fabulous. There is no proof that Peter was at Rome, except, perhaps, for a short time previous to his martyrdom, and even that is doubted by many learned men.*

This joint ministry of the Apostles was also claimed for the Church at Corinth, in open defiance of the Scripture record. It is referred to by Eusebius, in the fourth century (Hist. Eccles. Lib. iii. cap. 25).

Another Church tradition is that the two Apostles were confined together in the Mamertine Prison, from which they were taken to martyrdom. The prison is thus described:—"A modern staircase leads to the horrible dungeon of Ancus Martius, sixteen feet in height, thirty in length, and twenty-two in

* There is an elaborate discussion of this subject in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, 1858.

breadth. Originally there was no staircase, and the prisoners were let down here, and hence into the lower dungeon, through a hole in the middle of the ceiling. The large door at the side is a modern innovation, having been opened to admit the vast mass of pilgrims during the festa. The whole prison is constructed of huge blocks of tufa without cement. Some remains are shown of the *Scalæ Gemoniæ*—so called from the groans of the prisoners—by which the bodies were dragged forth to be exposed to the insults of the populace or to be thrown into the Tiber. It was by this staircase that Cicero came forth and announced the execution of the Catiline conspirators to the people in the Forum, by the single word *Vixerunt*, 'they have ceased to live.' Close to the exit of these stairs the Emperor Vitellius was murdered. On the wall by which you descend to the lower dungeon is a mark kissed by the faithful, as the spot against which St. Peter's head rested. The lower prison, called *Robur*, is constructed of huge blocks of tufa, fastened together by cramps of iron, and approaching horizontally to a common centre in the roof. It has been attributed from early times to Servius Tullius; but Ampere argues against the idea that the lower prison was of later origin than the upper, and suggests that it is Pelasgic, and older than any other building in Rome. It is described by Livy, and by Sallust, who depicts

its horrors in his account of the execution of the Catiline conspirators. The spot is shown to which these victims were attached and strangled in turn. In this dungeon, at an earlier period, Appius Claudius and Oppius, the decemvirs, committed suicide (B.C. 449). Here Jugurtha, king of Mauritania, was starved to death by Marius. Here Julius Cæsar, during his triumph for the conquest of Gaul, caused his gallant enemy, Vercingetorix, to be put to death. Here Sejanus, the friend and minister of Tiberius, disgraced too late, was executed for the murder of Drusus, son of the emperor, and for an intrigue with his daughter-in-law, Livilla. Here, also, Simon Bar Gioras, the last defender of Jerusalem, suffered during the triumph of Titus.

"The spot is more interesting to the Christian world as the prison of SS. Peter and Paul, who are said to have been bound for nine months to a pillar, which is shown here. A fountain of excellent water, beneath the floor of the prison, is attributed to the prayers of St. Peter, that he might have wherewith to baptize his gaolers, Processus and Martinianus; but, unfortunately for this ecclesiastical tradition, the fountain is described by Plutarch as having existed at the time of Jugurtha's imprisonment [B.C. 103."]*

* *Hare's Walks in Rome*, i. 128—130.

This tradition is by no means ancient. Its origin is unknown. The early historians of the Church take no notice of it. And it is observable, that Alban Butler, in his "Lives of the Saints," omits to mention it, which is a clear indication that he did not acknowledge its truth.

Recent investigations have thrown the matter into utter uncertainty. It now appears that the Mamertine prisons were connected with other structures, built for the same purposes, by corridors of considerable length, the whole constituting one large prison. An intelligent correspondent (Mr. C. J. Hemans) writes to the *London Athenæum*, under date of April 6, 1872, in the following terms:—

"Twice within the last fortnight have been opened and illuminated, for the public benefit, the Mamertine Prisons under the Forum, the other vaulted chambers below the adjacent Via Ghettarello, and the long corridor forming a communication between these two sets of subterranean interiors, now identified as belonging in fact to the same chief prison of ancient Rome. Most important have been the results of the researches commenced by Mr. J. H. Parker in 1868, with the assistance of Signor Gori, a well-known Roman archæologist; for it is now made evident that the theory which limited these prisons to the small dark chambers, one above another, below the churches of the Crocifisso and

S. Guiseppe dei Fulegnami, is utterly untenable; and that a place of durance for offenders of every class had the extent manifestly requisite for such uses in the capital of the empire. Livy says of one of the unfortunate victims confined here, *ut in carcere instans furis et latronis—includatur.* The long corridor, in two branches, of different directions, one lined with brick, the other with lithoid tufa—this last (obviously the most ancient) eighty yards in length—has at last been cleared out and made permeable. . . . In no other character can we now regard that ponderous structure, of which so little remains, than as one of the sides of the far-extending prisons, the principal front of which, on the Forum, was restored, as we now see it under the two superimposed churches, by the Consuls, whose names are still read on the stonework—Vibius Rufinus and Cocceius Nerva, A.D. 22. The tradition of *custodi*, that the subterranean way led from the prison to the catacombs of S. Sebastian, is now fully refuted. This discovery, establishing the real extent of those Mamertine prisons, throws back into regions of uncertainty the supposed confinement of the two Apostles—at least, the exact site, hitherto confidently assumed, of their incarceration up to the day of their common martyrdom. Such a step in archæological progress seems the more appropriate, and at the right moment, just after the novelty,

unprecedented in Rome, of a public discussion on the reality, boldly and learnedly denied, of the arrival of St. Peter, and the tenure of his pontificate here.* The arguments of those who find no proof that the Apostle could even have set his foot in this city, are published for sale in the streets, and discussed by journals on both sides. Well would it be if thoughtful minds of the Roman Catholic communion were led to own the subordinate importance of vague

* Five years ago it would not have been believed that this subject could be publicly discussed at Rome. But it has been. On the evenings of Feb. 9 and 10 last, meetings were held in the hall of a Pontifical Academy, attended by Roman Catholics and Protestants in equal numbers, admitted by tickets. Four presidents were appointed, two on each side. The disputants were—on the Roman Catholic side, Canon Fabiani, Signor Cipolla, a priest, and Signor Guidi, a learned man;—on the Protestant side, Sciarelli, a Neapolitan, formerly a Franciscan monk; Ribetti, a Waldensian pastor, and the well-known Gavazzi.

Sciarelli undertook to prove that St. Peter did not come to establish his see in Rome from 42 to 66 of the Vulgar era; and that not having come during this time he could not have held the Pontificate here for the space of twenty-five years, nor here have suffered martyrdom in the same year of 66, in the time of the Emperor Nero." He was supported by Ribetti and Gavazzi. Fabiani, on the other hand, undertook to prove that Peter *did* establish his see in Rome, according to the Catholic belief, and he was followed by Cipolla and Guidi.

The meetings were conducted in a very orderly manner, and profound impressions were produced. But it is stated that a prohibition of such meetings has been since issued by the authority of the Pope. John iii. 20, 21.

An "Authentic Report" of the discussion has been published at the Wesleyan Conference Office, London.

legends regarding one Apostle, as compared with the historical realities, the acts and writings, which make known to us, in sunlight clearness, the intellectual supremacy of another, whether or not he was the companion of St. Peter in any imprisonment amidst the horrors of the Mamertine dungeons."—*Athenæum*, April 13, 1872.

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